JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE – Part 7

1

STEEL BALL RUN

by Hirohiko Araki

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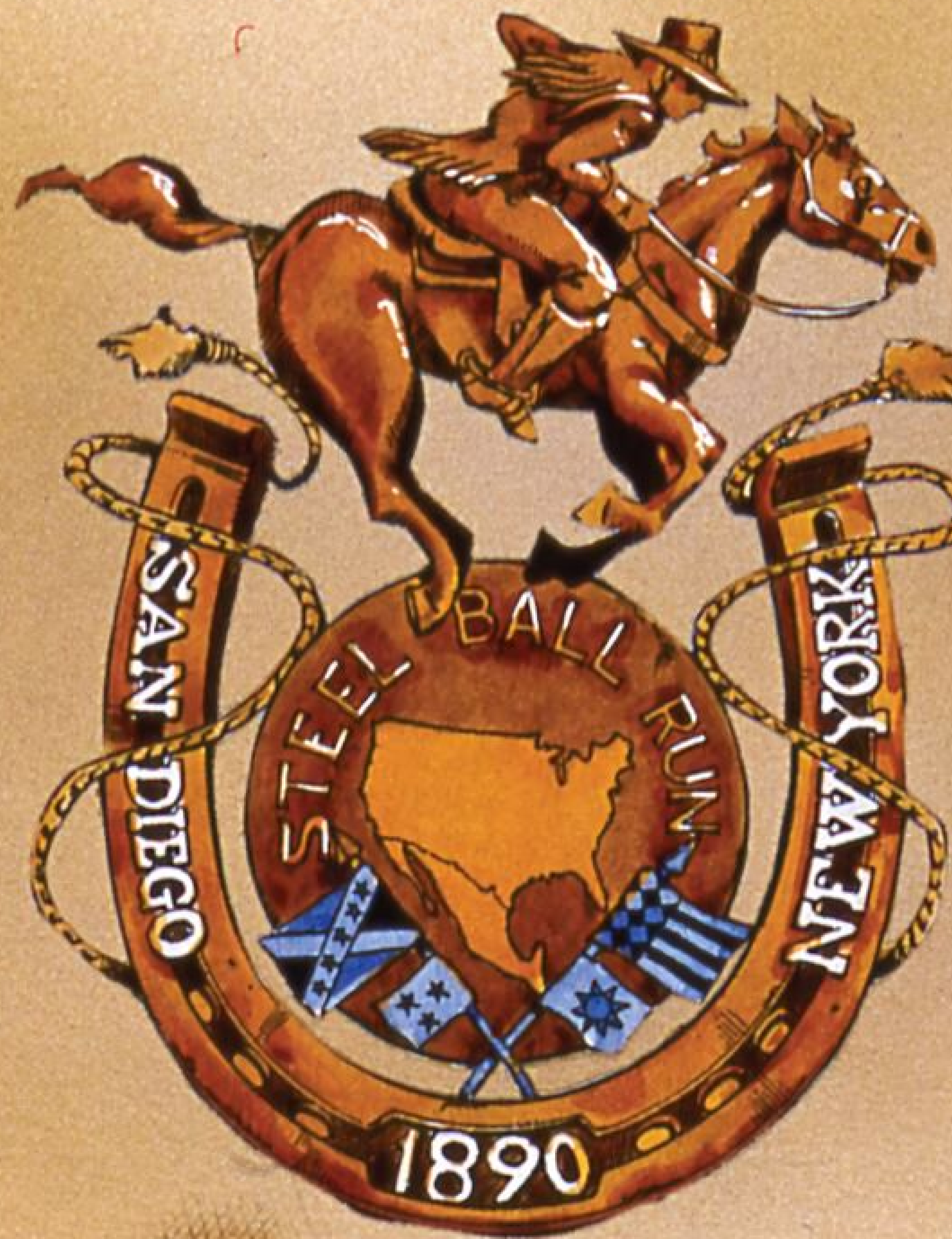
SETTING THE STAGE

Just four years after Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876, it had been installed in nearly 50,000 American homes.

The steam locomotives of the North American transcontinental railroad had achieved a top speed of 75 mph and an average speed of 55 mph.

Sporting events had begun to capture public excitement. Professional baseball's National League was created in 1876, and the Chicago White Stockings became the first champions. In 1891, Domino won the Kentucky Derby. The famous, undefeated horse was later nicknamed "the Black Whirlwind."

In 1896, the first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens. Though the event was strictly stipulated as an amateur competition, the winner in each sport was awarded a monetary prize.



CHAPTER 1: Steel Ball Run: The Press Conference

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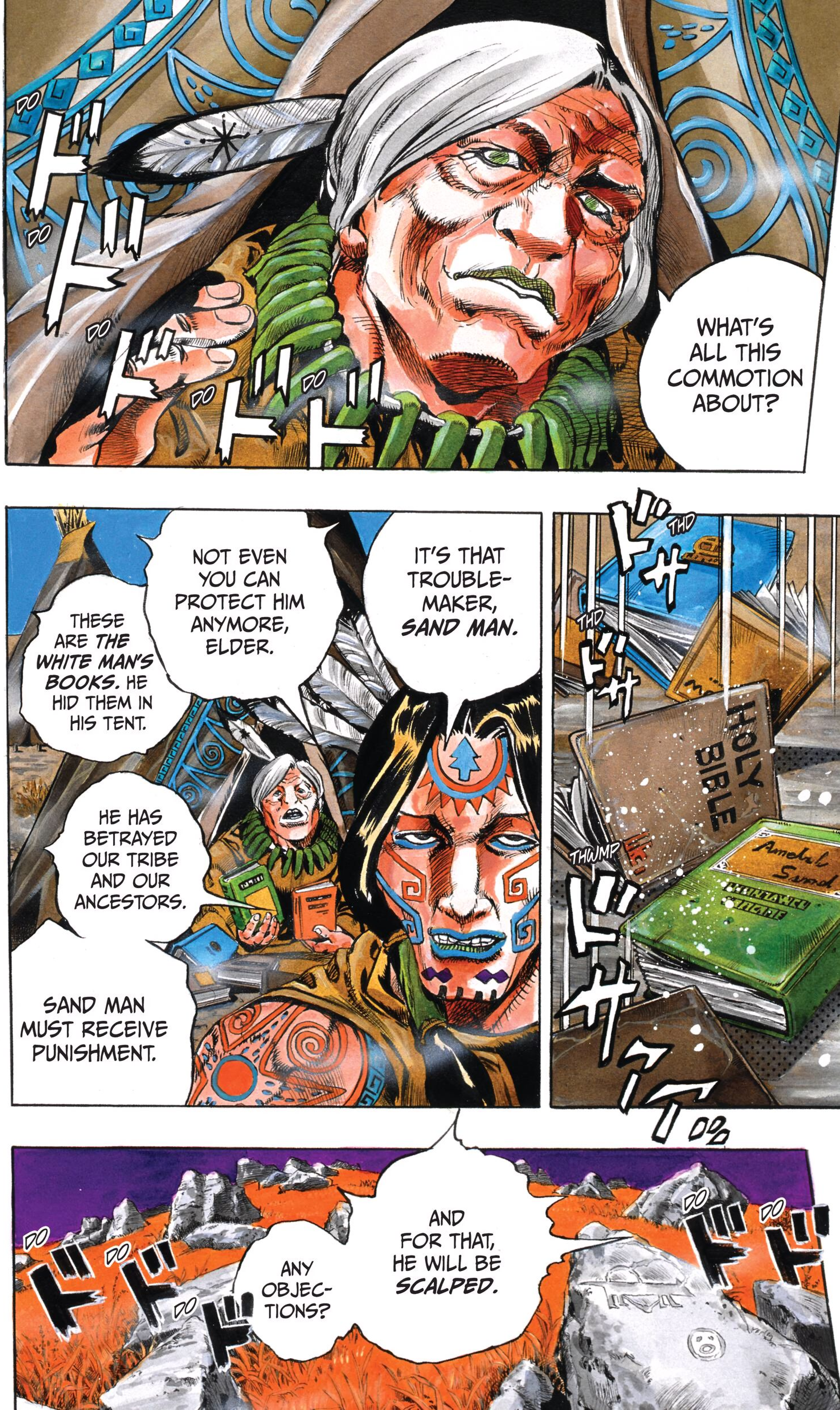
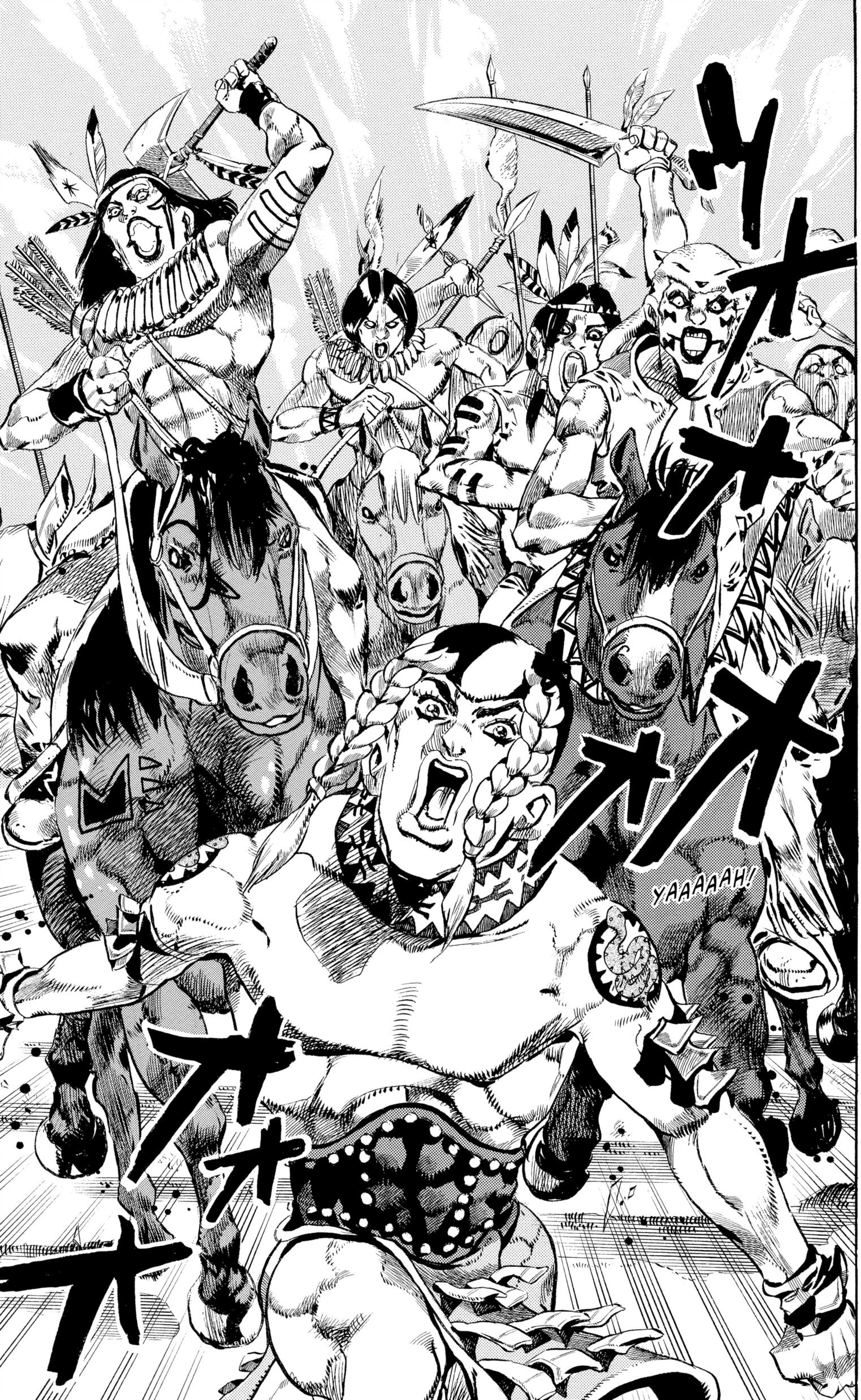

DO ド DO ド DO ド DO ド DO ド
WHAT'S ALL THIS COMMOTION ABOUT?
THD ドサ
THD ドサ
HOLY BIBLE
THWMP ドサ
DO ドン
IT'S THAT TROUBLE-MAKER, *SAND MAN.*
NOT EVEN YOU CAN PROTECT HIM ANYMORE, ELDER.
THESE ARE *THE WHITE MAN'S BOOKS.* HE HID THEM IN HIS TENT.
HE HAS BETRAYED OUR TRIBE AND OUR ANCESTORS.
SAND MAN MUST RECEIVE PUNISHMENT.
AND FOR THAT, HE WILL BE *SCALPED.*
ANY OBJECTIONS?
DO ド DO ド DO ド DO ド DO ド

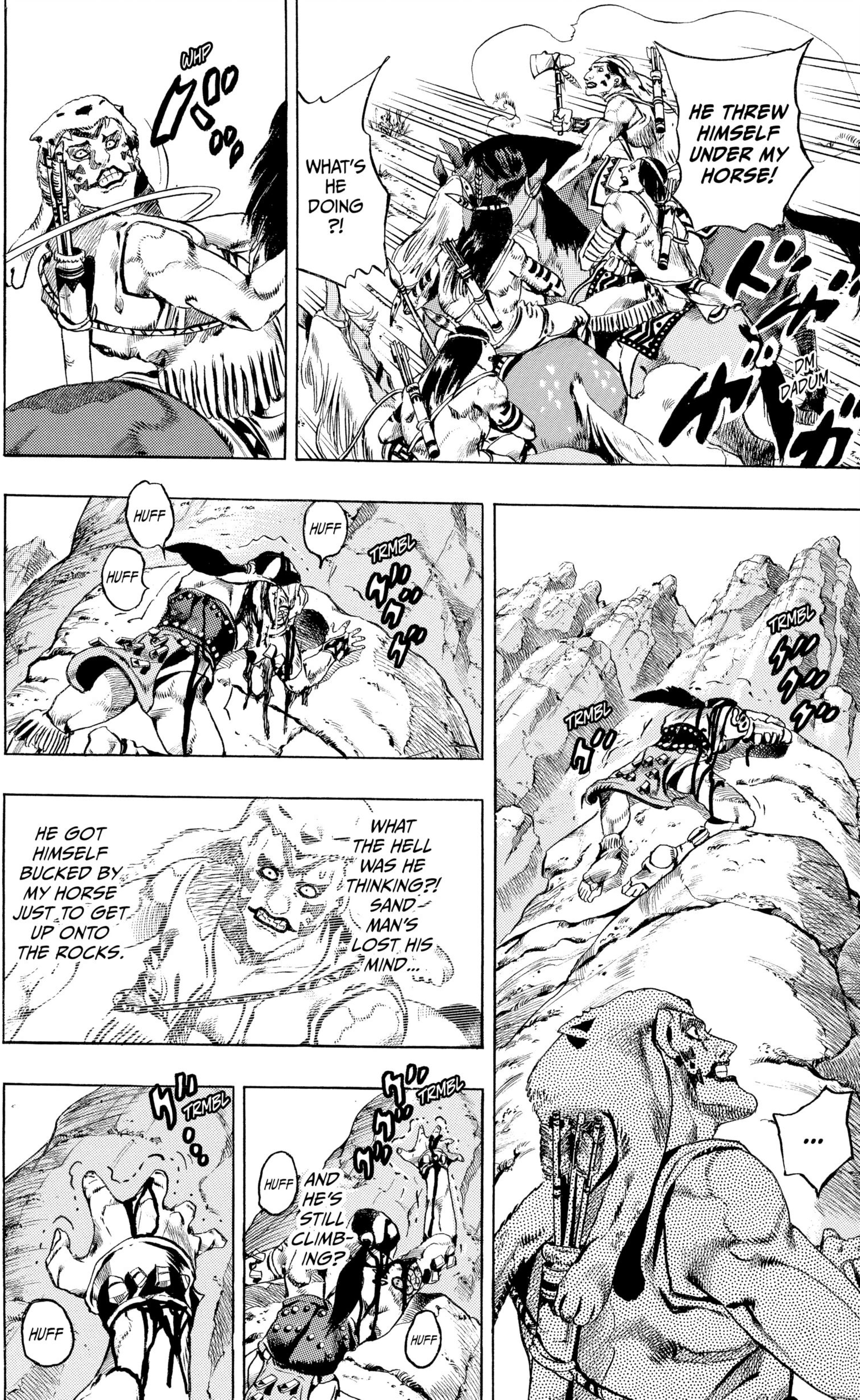

ウオオオオオ
YAAAAAH!
オォオ

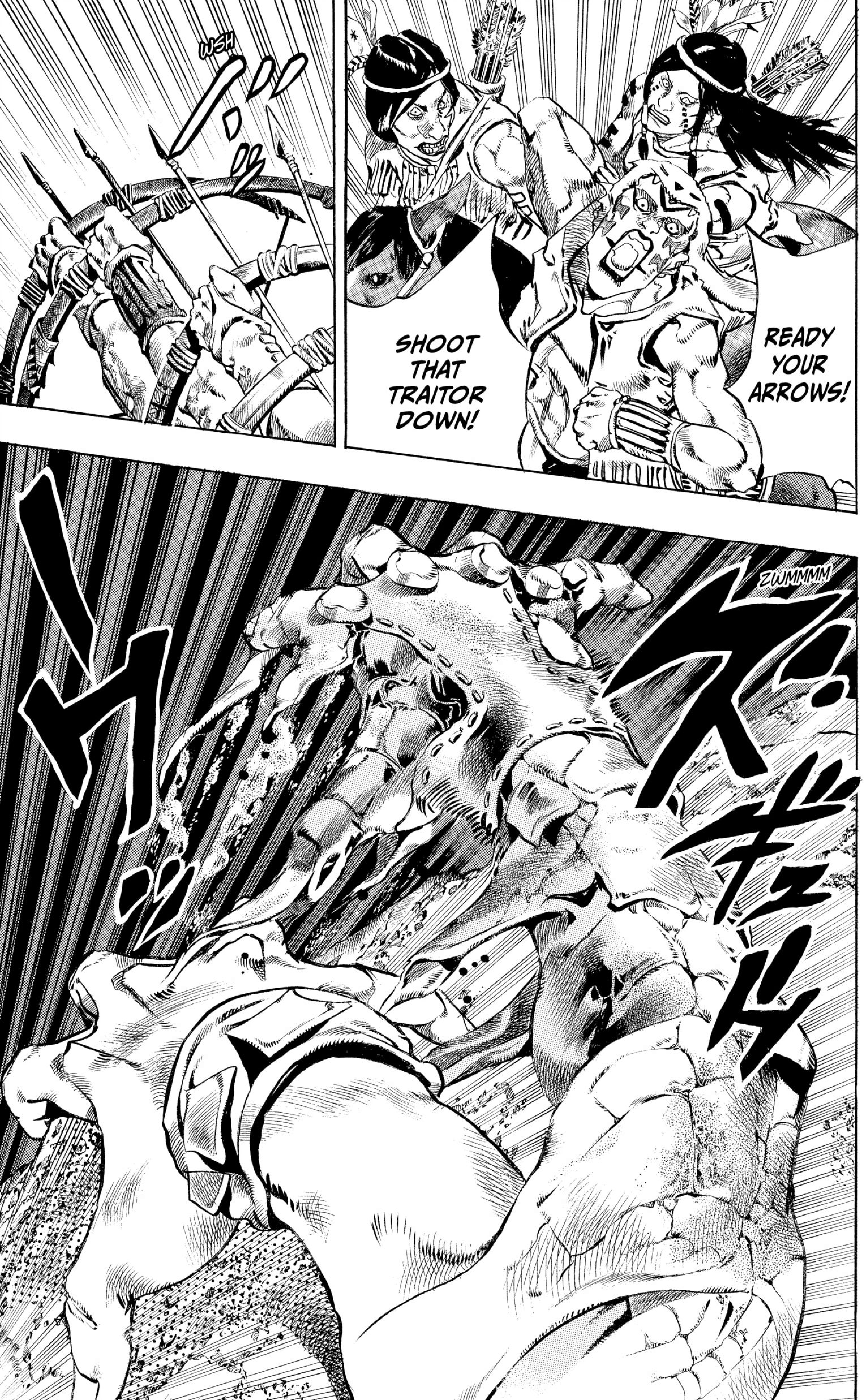
ド
GRIP
ギュー
KLENCH
ZWSH
VWOOM

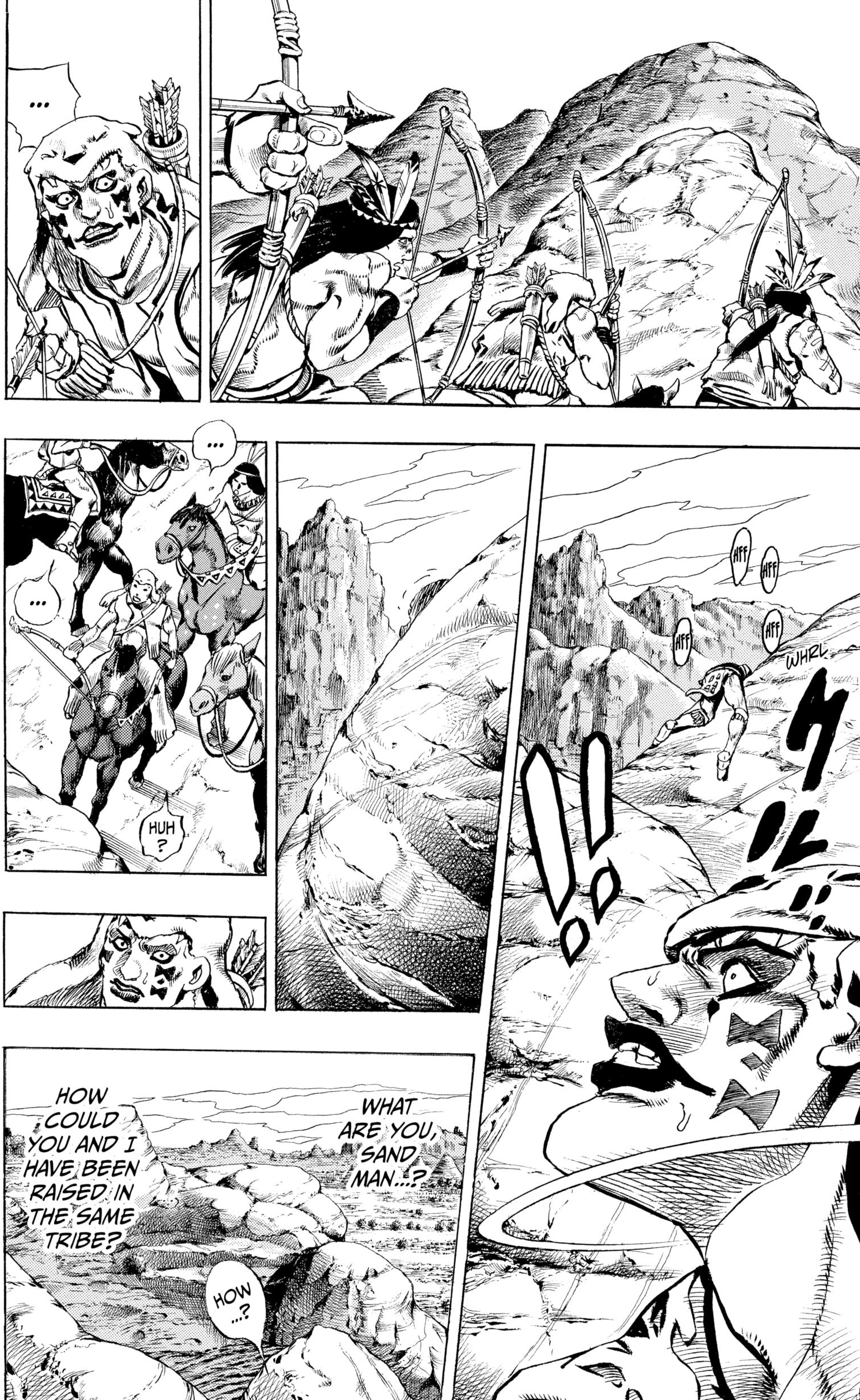
FWOOOOSH
WHAT...? HE...HE'S GETTING FASTER. HE'S EVEN OUTRUNNING THE HORSES!
BUT...THAT KIND OF RUNNING...
DSH
DSH
DSH
I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE. WHERE DID HE LEARN IT?
THAT'S NOT OUR PEOPLE'S WAY OF RUNNING!
THAT'S HOW THE WHITE MAN RUNS! IT'S HOW THEY RUN WHEN THEY'RE COMPETING FOR MONEY OR TROPHIES!
BUT THEY CAN ONLY USE IT FOR RUNNING IN SHORT BURSTS!
WHAT ARE YOU ALL WAITING FOR?! PUSH YOUR HORSES!
HE'S TRYING TO ESCAPE INTO THE CRAGS!
VWOOOOOSH
DON'T LET HIM GET NEAR THOSE ROCKS!

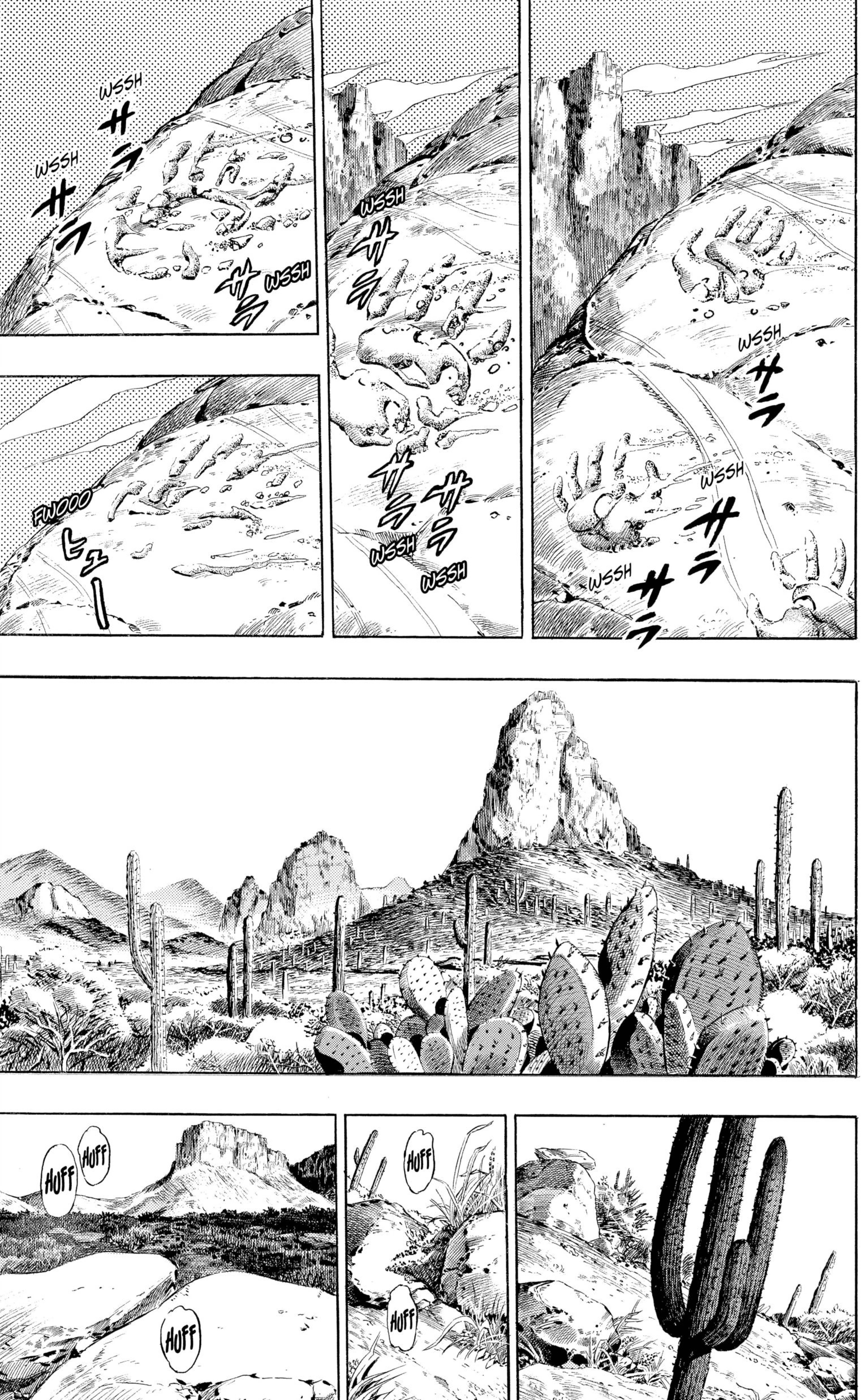
SAND MAN! YOU'VE KEPT YOUR DISTANCE FROM US SINCE YOU WERE A CHILD.
IT FELT LIKE YOU WERE MOCKING US.
PUNISH HIM!
PUNISH HIM! HE MUST BE PUNISHED!
ドドドドドド
DO DO DO DO DO
PUNISH HIM!
THOSE WHO DEFY THE ANCESTORS WILL BE PUNISHED!!
MORE AND MORE, WE ARE BEING FORCED FROM OUR ANCESTORS' LANDS BY THE WHITE MAN! DO YOU REALLY LOOK DOWN ON US AS THEY DO?!
ドドドドド
DO DO DO DO DO
ドドドドド
DO DO DO
YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH WHAT YOU'VE DONE, SAND MAN!
FWSH

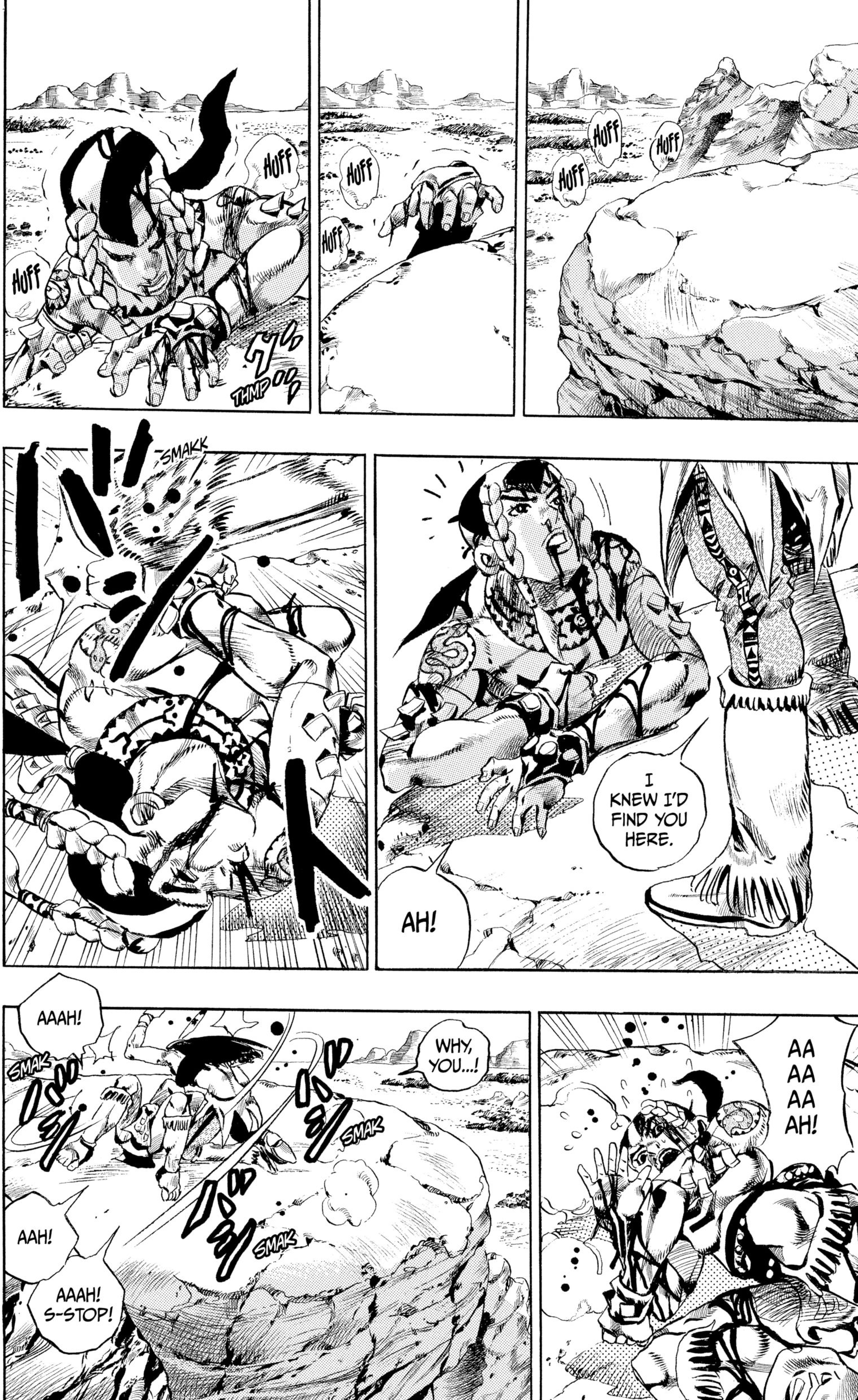
ZWIP
WHAT ...?
HE'S UNDER MY HORSE...
SKF
SKF
SKF
SKF
SKF
SKF
SKF
URGH!
KRAKK
WHA-BAAAM
DDD
AUGH!
DDD

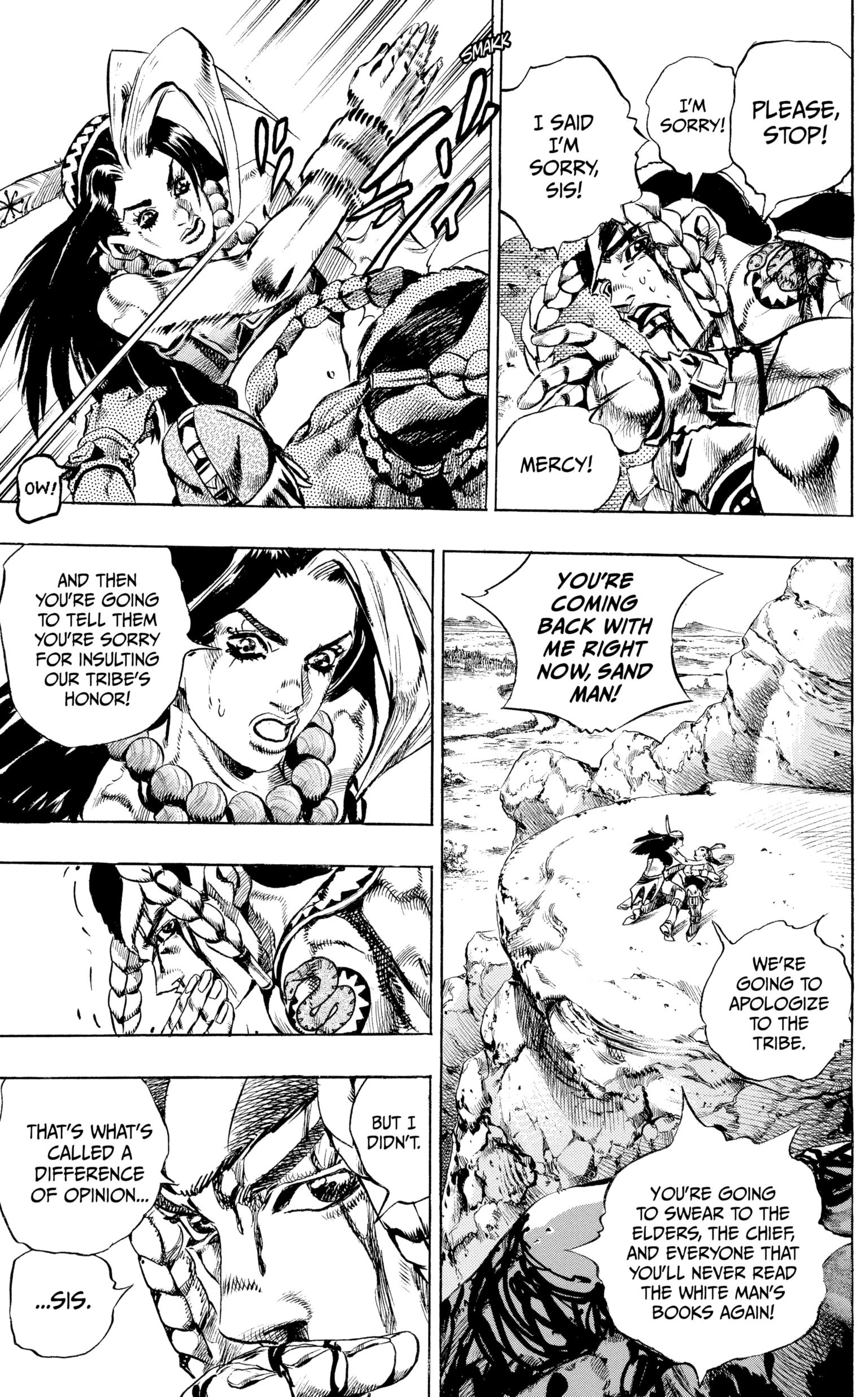

HE THREW HIMSELF UNDER MY HORSE!
WHAT'S HE DOING ?!
DM DADUM
WHP
TRMBL
TRMBL
...
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
TRMBL
WHAT THE HELL WAS HE THINKING?! SAND MAN'S LOST HIS MIND...
HE GOT HIMSELF BUCKED BY MY HORSE JUST TO GET UP ONTO THE ROCKS.
TRMBL
HUFF
AND HE'S STILL CLIMBING?
HUFF
TRMBL
HUFF

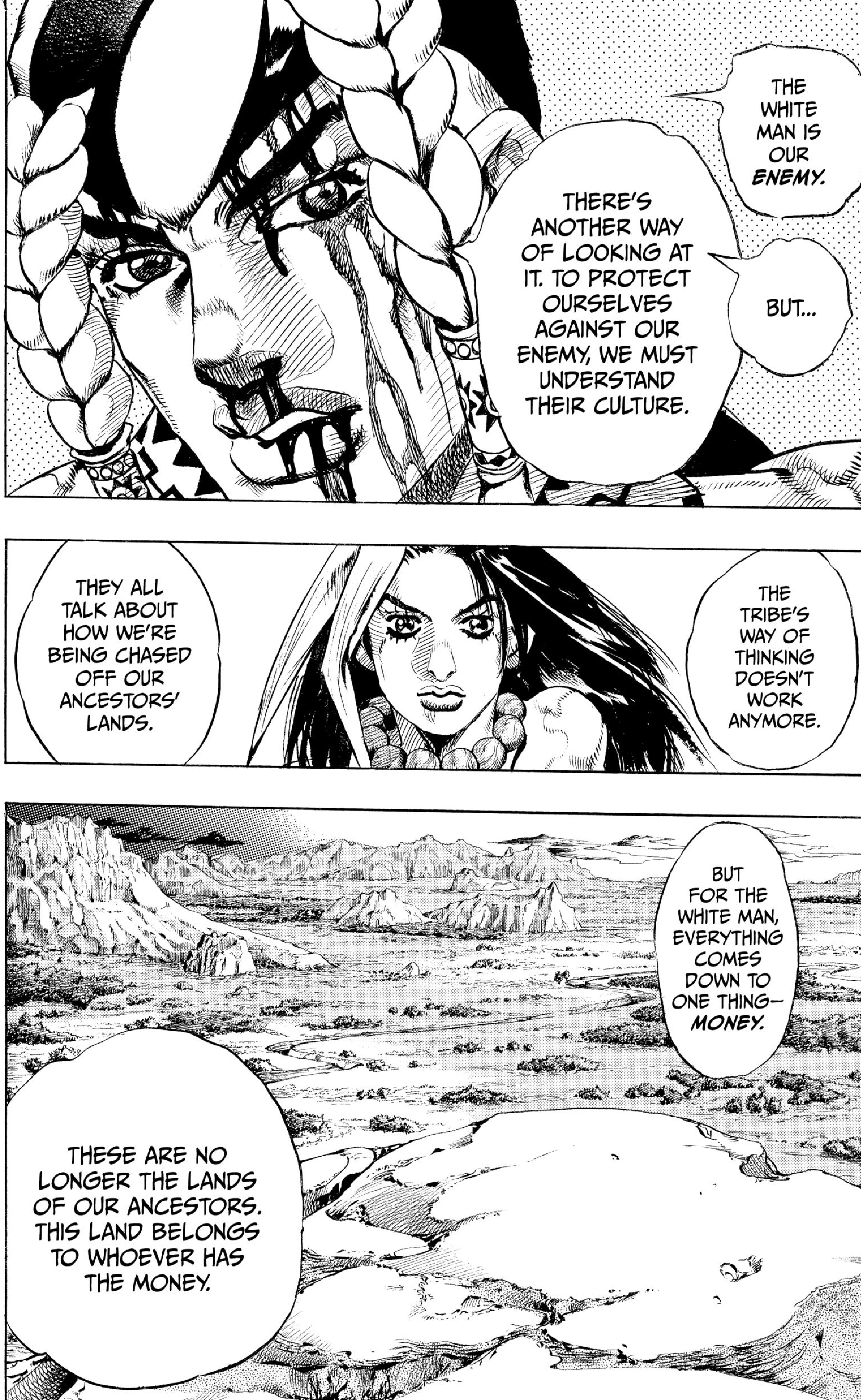

READY YOUR ARROWS!
SHOOT THAT TRAITOR DOWN!
WSH
ZWMMMM

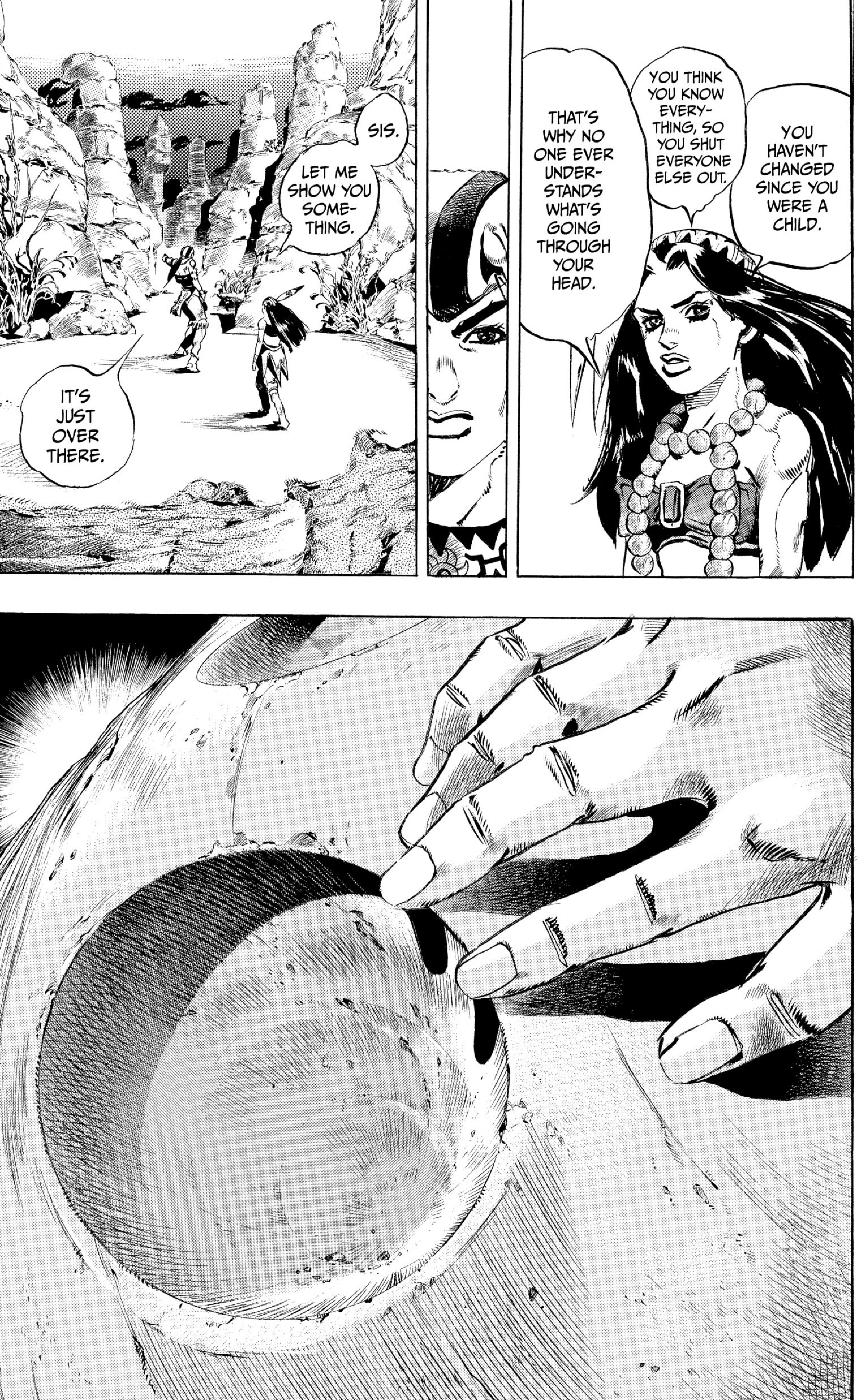

...
HFF
HFF
HFF
HFF
WHRL
!!
...
...
HUH?
WHAT ARE YOU, SAND MAN...?
HOW COULD YOU AND I HAVE BEEN RAISED IN THE SAME TRIBE?
HOW ...?


WSSH
サラ
WSSH
サラ
WSSH
サラ
WSSH
サラ
サラ
WSSH
サラ
WSSH
WSSH
サラ
WSSH
サラ
サラ
WSSH
FWOOO
ヒュー
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

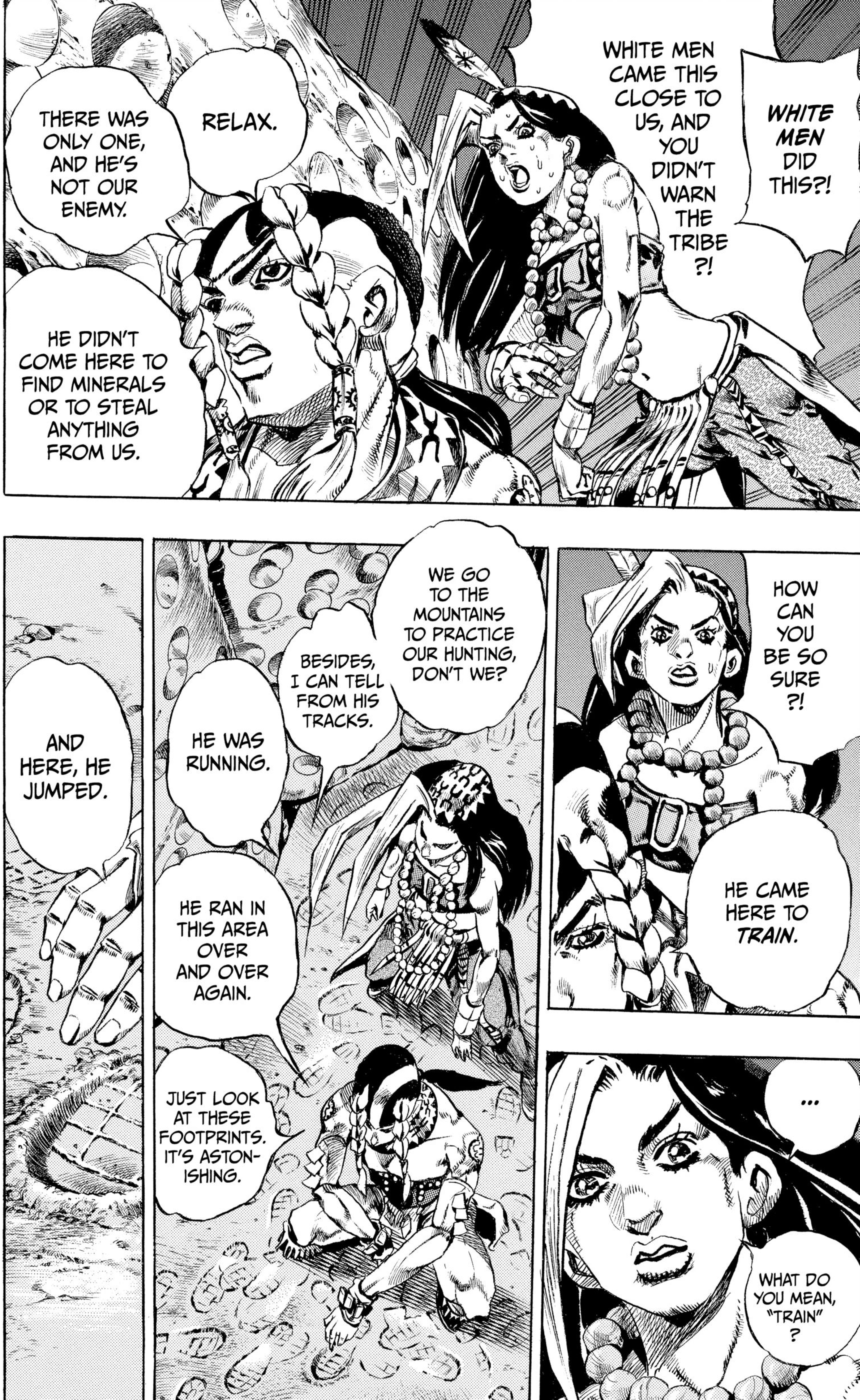

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
THMP
I KNEW I'D FIND YOU HERE.
AH!
SMAKK
AAAAAAAAAH!
WHY, YOU...!
AAAH!
SMAK
SMAK
SMAK
AAH!
AAAH! S-STOP!

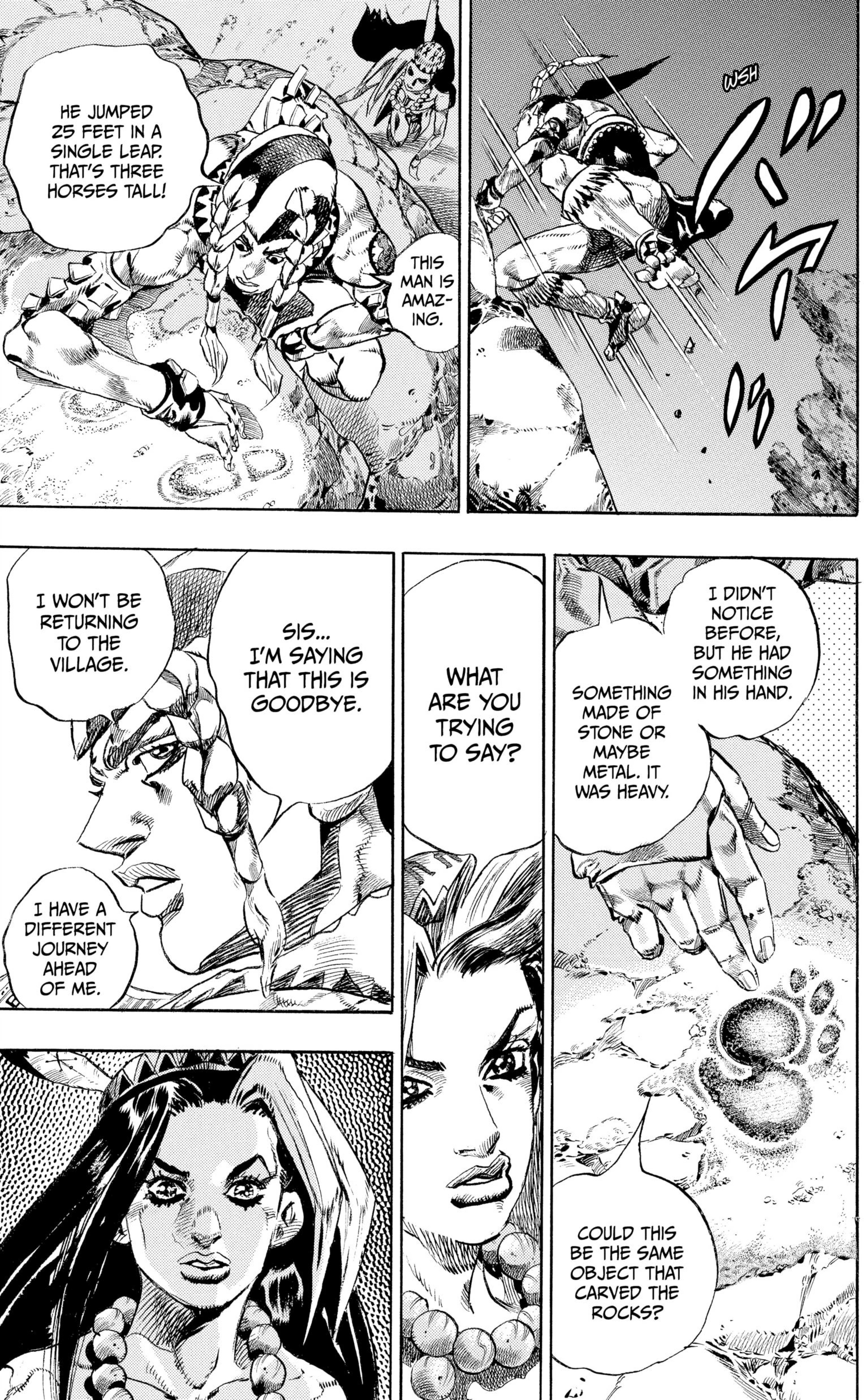

PLEASE, STOP!
I'M SORRY!
I SAID I'M SORRY, SIS!
MERCY!
SMAKK
OW!
YOU'RE COMING BACK WITH ME RIGHT NOW, SAND MAN!
WE'RE GOING TO APOLOGIZE TO THE TRIBE.
YOU'RE GOING TO SWEAR TO THE ELDERS, THE CHIEF, AND EVERYONE THAT YOU'LL NEVER READ THE WHITE MAN'S BOOKS AGAIN!
AND THEN YOU'RE GOING TO TELL THEM YOU'RE SORRY FOR INSULTING OUR TRIBE'S HONOR!
BUT I DIDN'T.
THAT'S WHAT'S CALLED A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION...
...SIS.

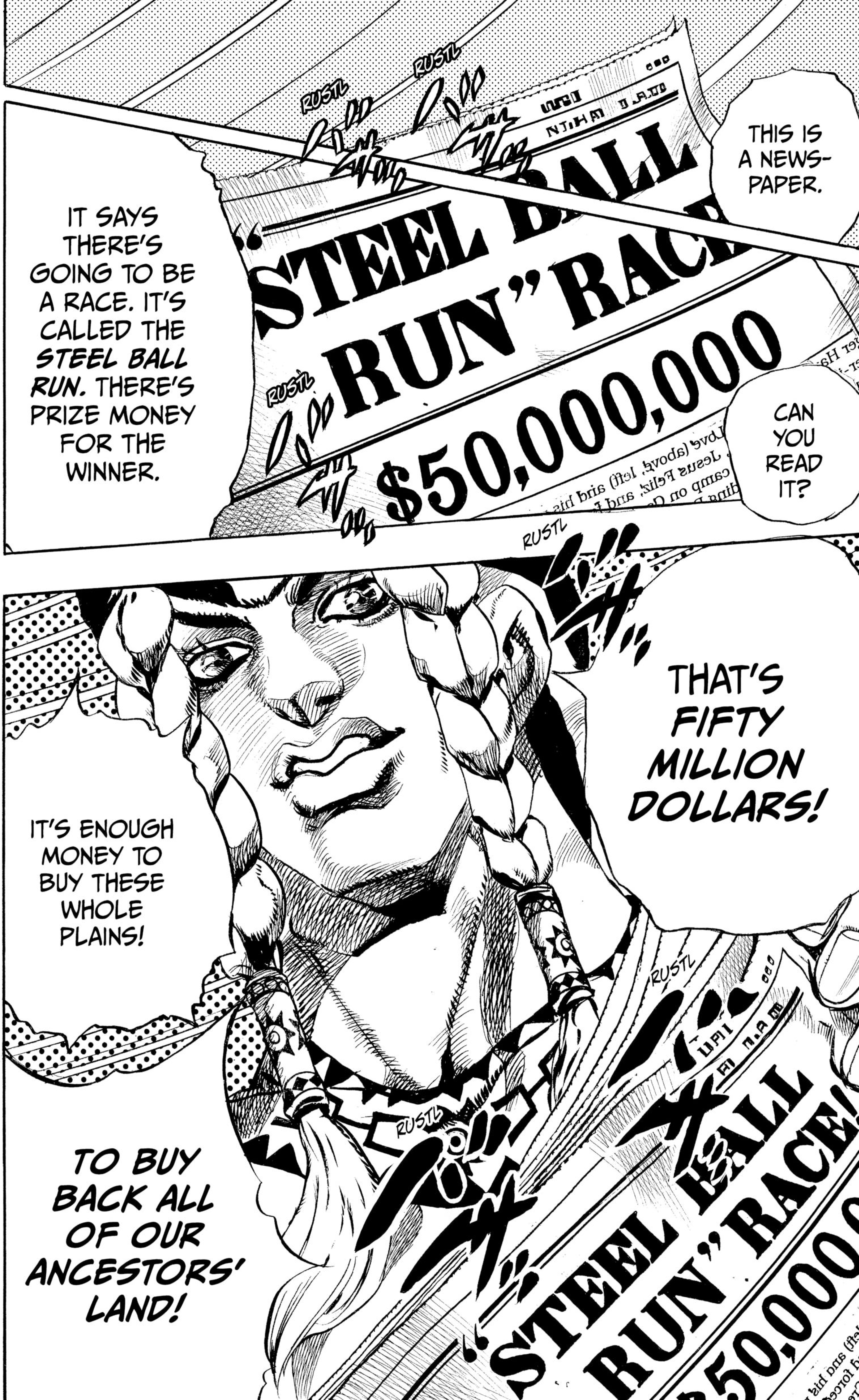

THE WHITE MAN IS OUR *ENEMY.*
BUT...
THERE'S ANOTHER WAY OF LOOKING AT IT. TO PROTECT OURSELVES AGAINST OUR ENEMY, WE MUST UNDERSTAND THEIR CULTURE.
THE TRIBE'S WAY OF THINKING DOESN'T WORK ANYMORE.
THEY ALL TALK ABOUT HOW WE'RE BEING CHASED OFF OUR ANCESTORS' LANDS.
BUT FOR THE WHITE MAN, EVERYTHING COMES DOWN TO ONE THING—*MONEY.*
THESE ARE NO LONGER THE LANDS OF OUR ANCESTORS. THIS LAND BELONGS TO WHOEVER HAS THE MONEY.

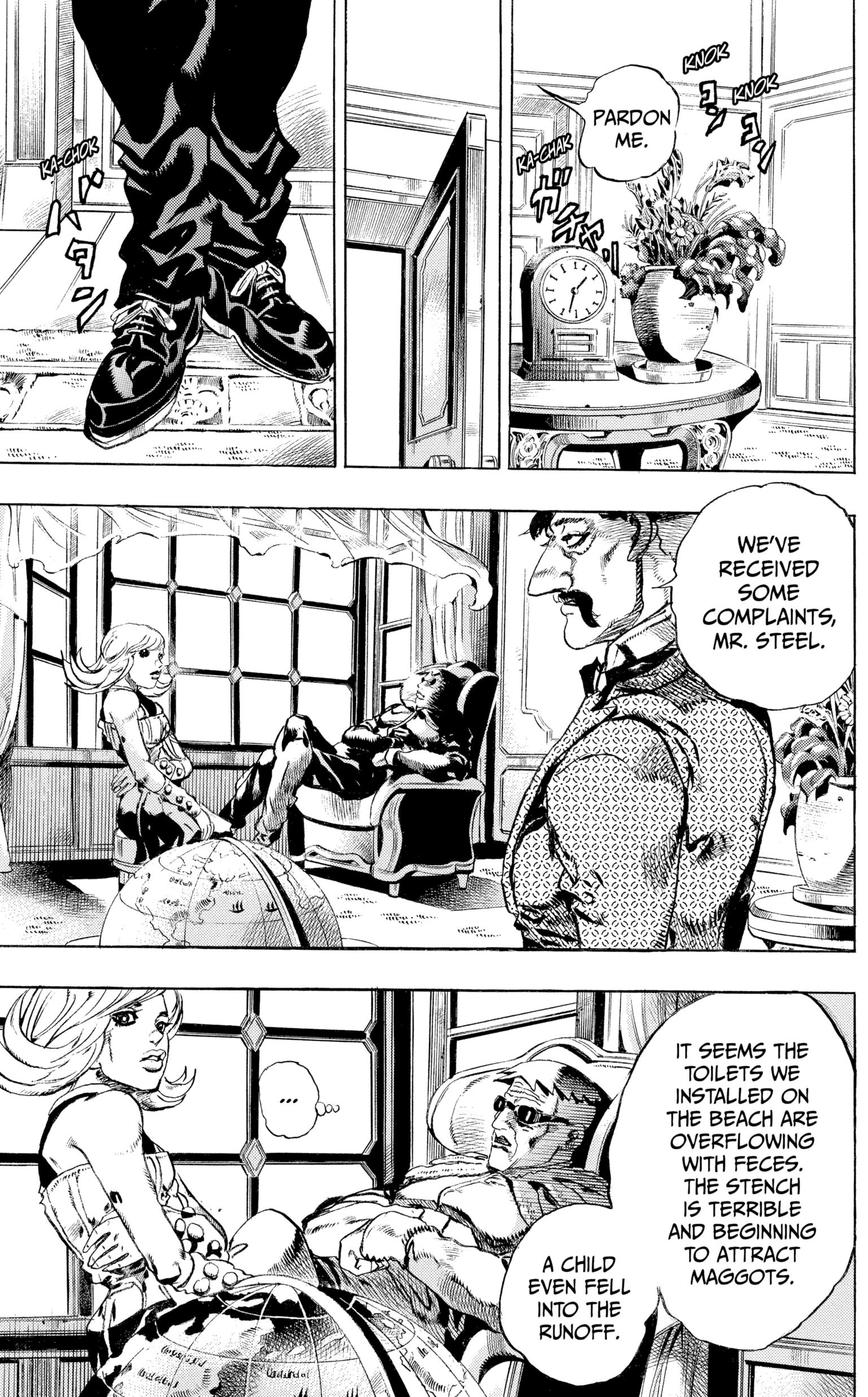

YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED SINCE YOU WERE A CHILD.
YOU THINK YOU KNOW EVERYTHING, SO YOU SHUT EVERYONE ELSE OUT.
THAT'S WHY NO ONE EVER UNDERSTANDS WHAT'S GOING THROUGH YOUR HEAD.
SIS.
LET ME SHOW YOU SOMETHING.
IT'S JUST OVER THERE.

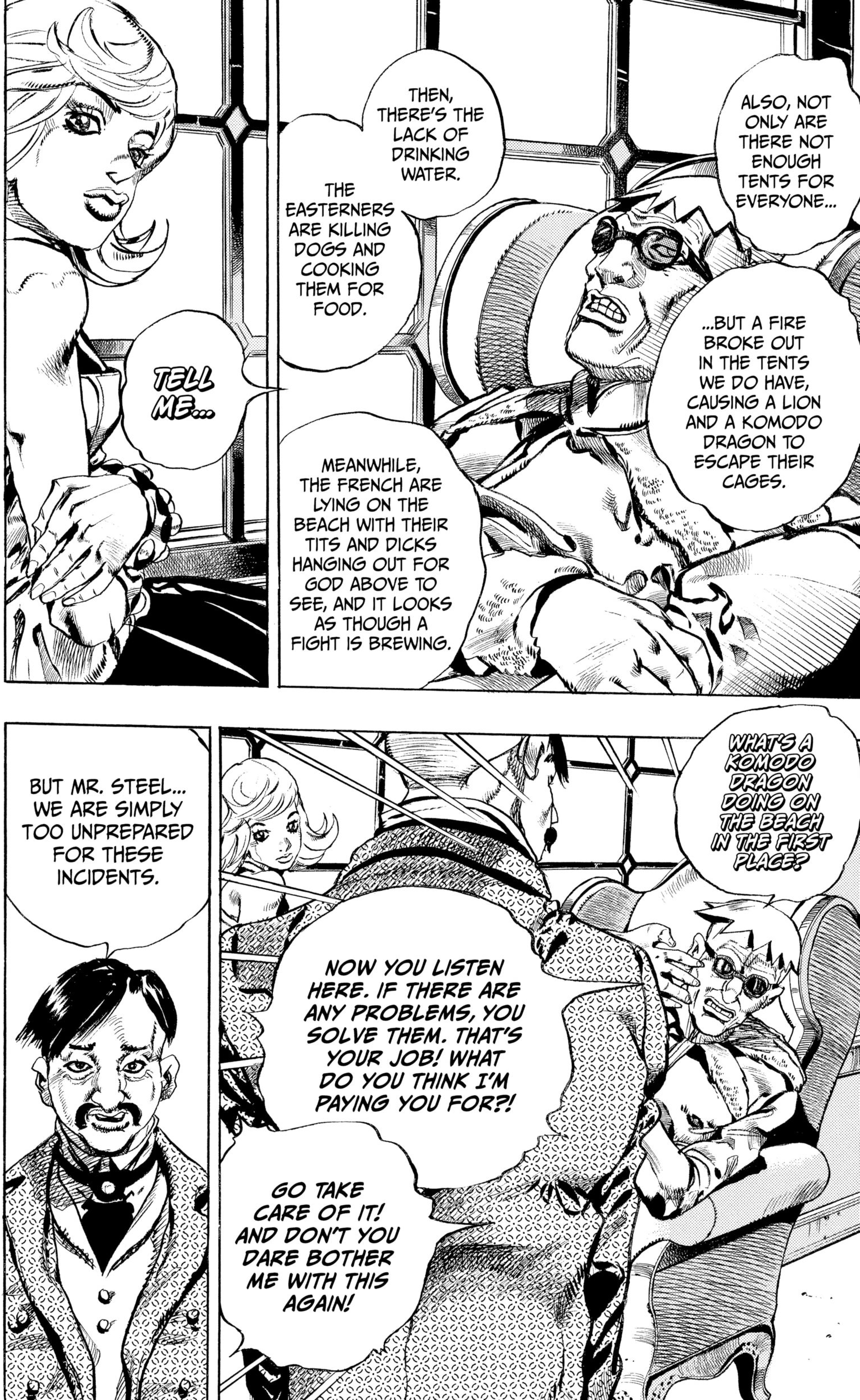
ゴ GO ゴ GO ゴ GO
ゴ GO
ゴ GO
ゴ GO
ゴ GO
ゴ GO
ゴ GO
WHAT IS THIS? ARE THESE SUPPOSED TO MEAN SOMETHING TO ME?
TWO WEEKS AGO.
THAT'S WHEN I FOUND THEM.
AT FIRST, I WONDERED IF THEY HAD BEEN CARVED, OR MAYBE CHISELED?
BUT THEY'RE PERFECT CIRCLES.
ゴ GO
ゴ GO
ゴ GO
ゴ GO
HOW WERE THESE MADE? THERE ARE NO DENTS OR IMPERFECTIONS.
EACH AND EVERY ONE IS *A COMPLETELY FLAWLESS SEMISPHERE.*
AND SOMEONE WOULD HAVE TO BE ABLE TO CARVE THEM INCREDIBLY FAST IN ORDER TO MAKE THIS MANY.
ゴ GO
ゴ GO
SO? WHY DOES IT MATTER?
THIS IS ALSO WHERE I FOUND THE WHITE MAN'S BOOKS.

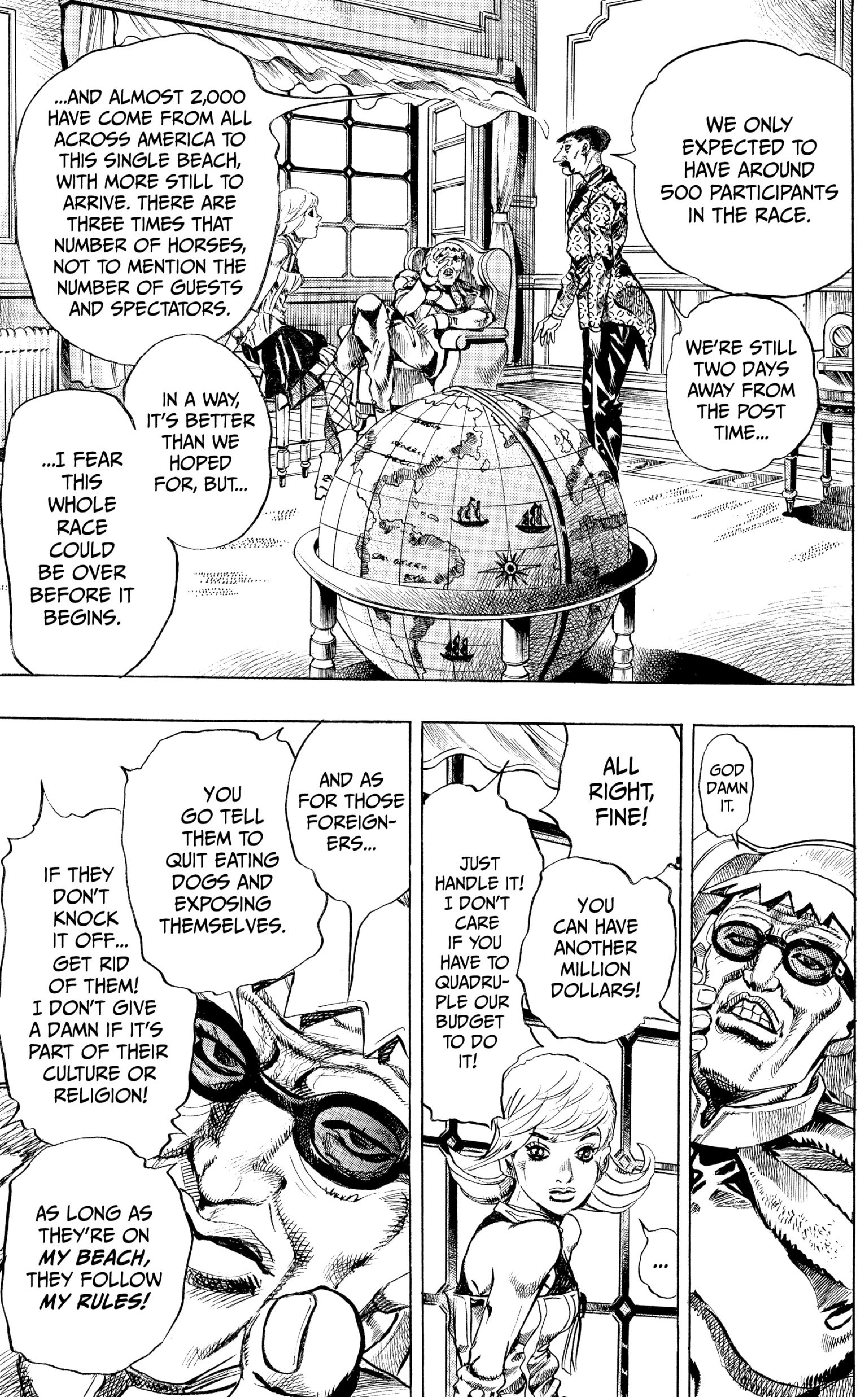

WHITE MEN DID THIS?!
WHITE MEN CAME THIS CLOSE TO US, AND YOU DIDN'T WARN THE TRIBE?!
RELAX.
THERE WAS ONLY ONE, AND HE'S NOT OUR ENEMY.
HE DIDN'T COME HERE TO FIND MINERALS OR TO STEAL ANYTHING FROM US.
HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE?!
HE CAME HERE TO *TRAIN.*
...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "TRAIN"?
WE GO TO THE MOUNTAINS TO PRACTICE OUR HUNTING, DON'T WE?
BESIDES, I CAN TELL FROM HIS TRACKS.
HE WAS RUNNING.
HE RAN IN THIS AREA OVER AND OVER AGAIN.
JUST LOOK AT THESE FOOTPRINTS. IT'S ASTONISHING.
AND HERE, HE JUMPED.


WSH
HE JUMPED 25 FEET IN A SINGLE LEAP. THAT'S THREE HORSES TALL!
THIS MAN IS AMAZING.
I DIDN'T NOTICE BEFORE, BUT HE HAD SOMETHING IN HIS HAND.
SOMETHING MADE OF STONE OR MAYBE METAL. IT WAS HEAVY.
COULD THIS BE THE SAME OBJECT THAT CARVED THE ROCKS?
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?
SIS... I'M SAYING THAT THIS IS GOODBYE.
I WON'T BE RETURNING TO THE VILLAGE.
I HAVE A DIFFERENT JOURNEY AHEAD OF ME.


RUSTL
RUSTL
THIS IS A NEWSPAPER.
"STEEL BALL RUN" RACE
$50,000,000
IT SAYS THERE'S GOING TO BE A RACE. IT'S CALLED THE *STEEL BALL RUN*. THERE'S PRIZE MONEY FOR THE WINNER.
RUSTL
CAN YOU READ IT?
RUSTL
THAT'S *FIFTY MILLION DOLLARS!*
IT'S ENOUGH MONEY TO BUY THESE WHOLE PLAINS!
RUSTL
RUSTL
"STEEL BALL RUN" RACE
$50,000,0
TO BUY BACK ALL OF OUR ANCESTORS' LAND!

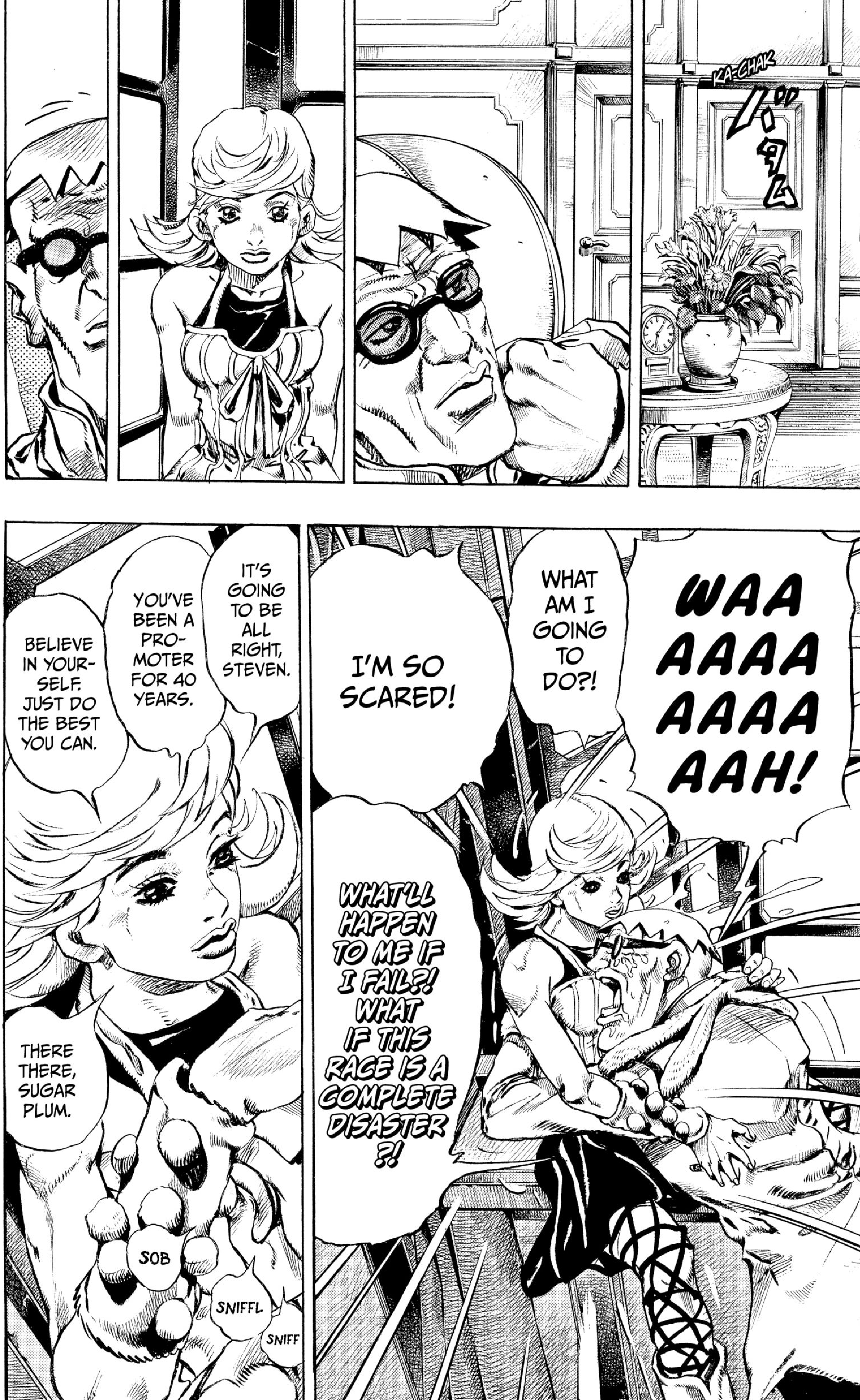

KNOK
コッ
KNOK
コッ
PARDON ME.
KA-CHAK
ガチャッ
KA-CHOK
パタン
WE'VE RECEIVED SOME COMPLAINTS, MR. STEEL.
IT SEEMS THE TOILETS WE INSTALLED ON THE BEACH ARE OVERFLOWING WITH FECES. THE STENCH IS TERRIBLE AND BEGINNING TO ATTRACT MAGGOTS.
A CHILD EVEN FELL INTO THE RUNOFF.
...

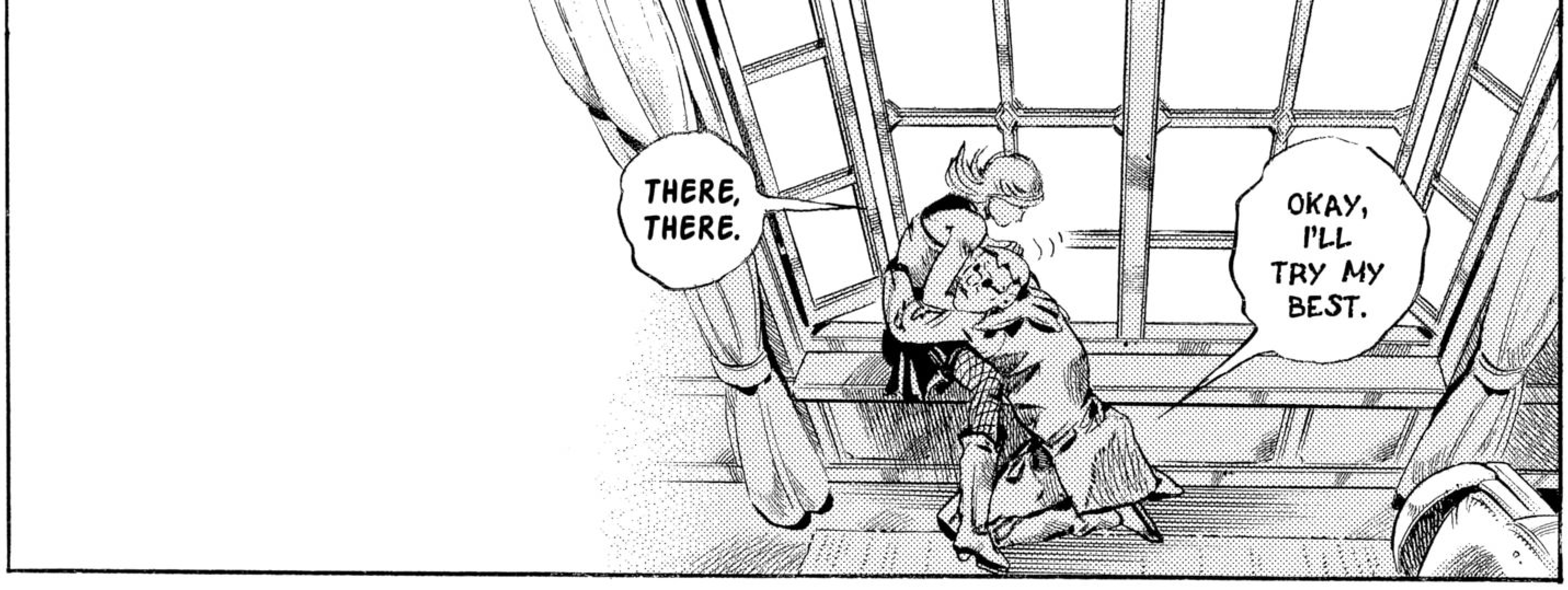

ALSO, NOT ONLY ARE THERE NOT ENOUGH TENTS FOR EVERYONE...
...BUT A FIRE BROKE OUT IN THE TENTS WE DO HAVE, CAUSING A LION AND A KOMODO DRAGON TO ESCAPE THEIR CAGES.
THEN, THERE'S THE LACK OF DRINKING WATER.
THE EASTERNERS ARE KILLING DOGS AND COOKING THEM FOR FOOD.
MEANWHILE, THE FRENCH ARE LYING ON THE BEACH WITH THEIR TITS AND DICKS HANGING OUT FOR GOD ABOVE TO SEE, AND IT LOOKS AS THOUGH A FIGHT IS BREWING.
TELL ME...
WHAT'S A KOMODO DRAGON DOING ON THE BEACH IN THE FIRST PLACE?
BUT MR. STEEL... WE ARE SIMPLY TOO UNPREPARED FOR THESE INCIDENTS.
NOW YOU LISTEN HERE. IF THERE ARE ANY PROBLEMS, YOU SOLVE THEM. THAT'S YOUR JOB! WHAT DO YOU THINK I'M PAYING YOU FOR?!
GO TAKE CARE OF IT! AND DON'T YOU DARE BOTHER ME WITH THIS AGAIN!

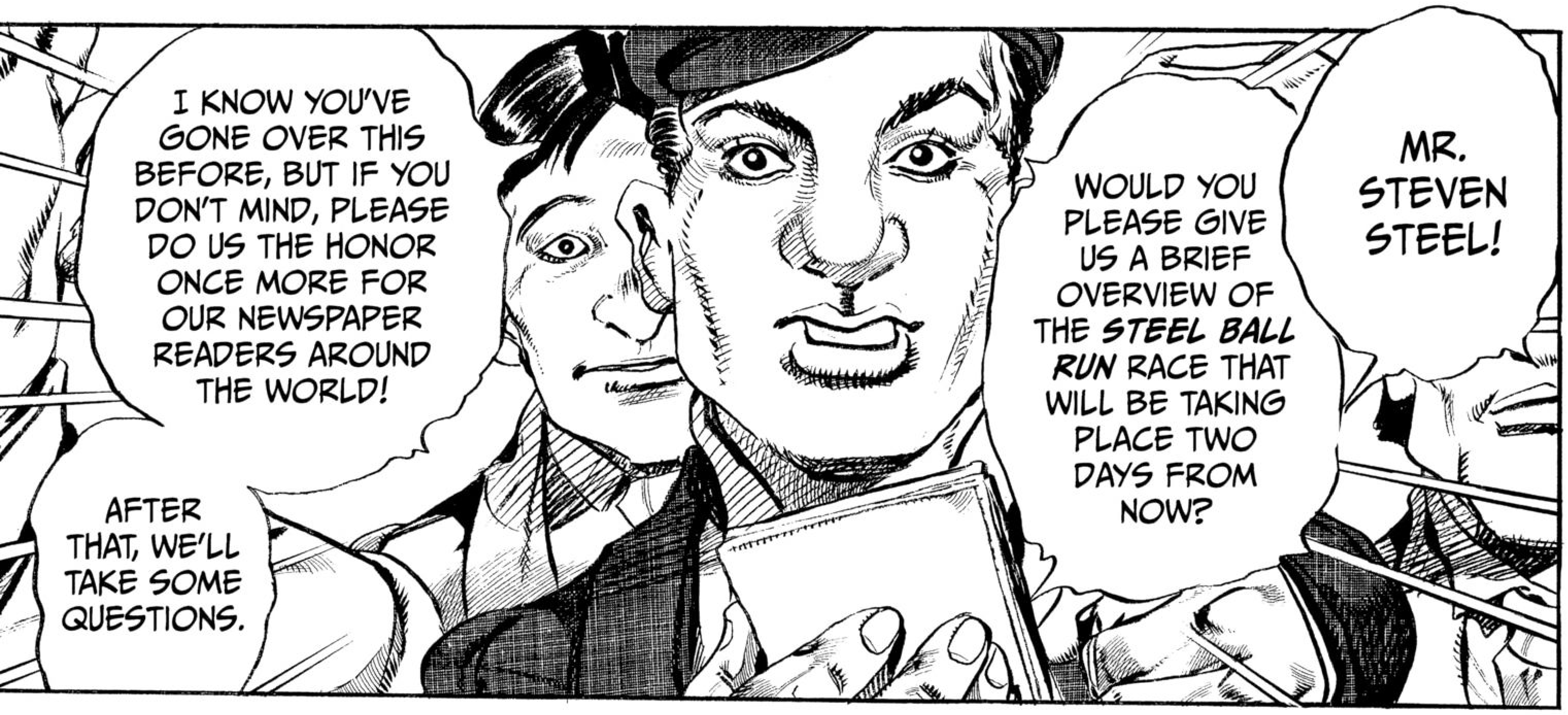

WE ONLY EXPECTED TO HAVE AROUND 500 PARTICIPANTS IN THE RACE.
...AND ALMOST 2,000 HAVE COME FROM ALL ACROSS AMERICA TO THIS SINGLE BEACH, WITH MORE STILL TO ARRIVE. THERE ARE THREE TIMES THAT NUMBER OF HORSES, NOT TO MENTION THE NUMBER OF GUESTS AND SPECTATORS.
WE'RE STILL TWO DAYS AWAY FROM THE POST TIME...
IN A WAY, IT'S BETTER THAN WE HOPED FOR, BUT...
...I FEAR THIS WHOLE RACE COULD BE OVER BEFORE IT BEGINS.
GOD DAMN IT.
ALL RIGHT, FINE!
YOU CAN HAVE ANOTHER MILLION DOLLARS!
JUST HANDLE IT! I DON'T CARE IF YOU HAVE TO QUADRUPLE OUR BUDGET TO DO IT!
...
AND AS FOR THOSE FOREIGNERS...
YOU GO TELL THEM TO QUIT EATING DOGS AND EXPOSING THEMSELVES.
IF THEY DON'T KNOCK IT OFF... GET RID OF THEM! I DON'T GIVE A DAMN IF IT'S PART OF THEIR CULTURE OR RELIGION!
AS LONG AS THEY'RE ON *MY BEACH*, THEY FOLLOW *MY RULES!*

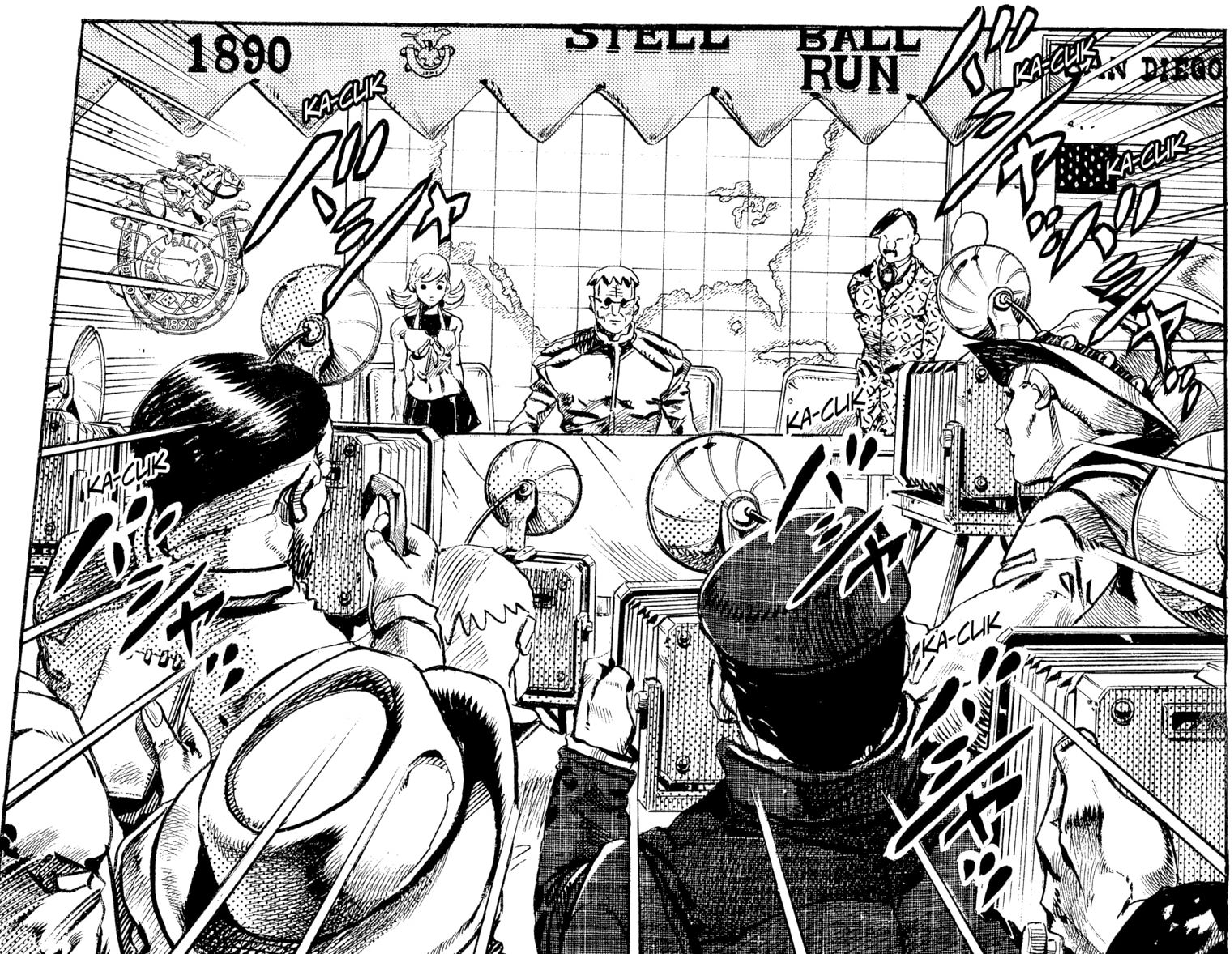
There's one more matter, Mr. Steel.
It's nearly time...
...for the Steel Ball Run press conference to begin.
Ah, yes.
I'll be right there.
ドオ
DOOOOO
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー
OOO
オオ
オオ
OOM
オオオオ
"STEEL BA
RUN" R

CHATTER
ガヤ
CHATTER
ガヤ
CHATTER
ガヤ
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー
CHATTER
ガヤ
CHATTER
ガヤ
CHATTER
ガヤ
CHATTER
ガヤ
"STEEL BALL RUN" RACE
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー


KA-CHAK
バタム
WAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?!
I'M SO SCARED!
WHAT'LL HAPPEN TO ME IF I FAIL?! WHAT IF THIS RACE IS A COMPLETE DISASTER?!
IT'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT, STEVEN.
YOU'VE BEEN A PROMOTER FOR 40 YEARS.
BELIEVE IN YOURSELF. JUST DO THE BEST YOU CAN.
THERE THERE, SUGAR PLUM.
SOB
SNIFFL
SNIFF

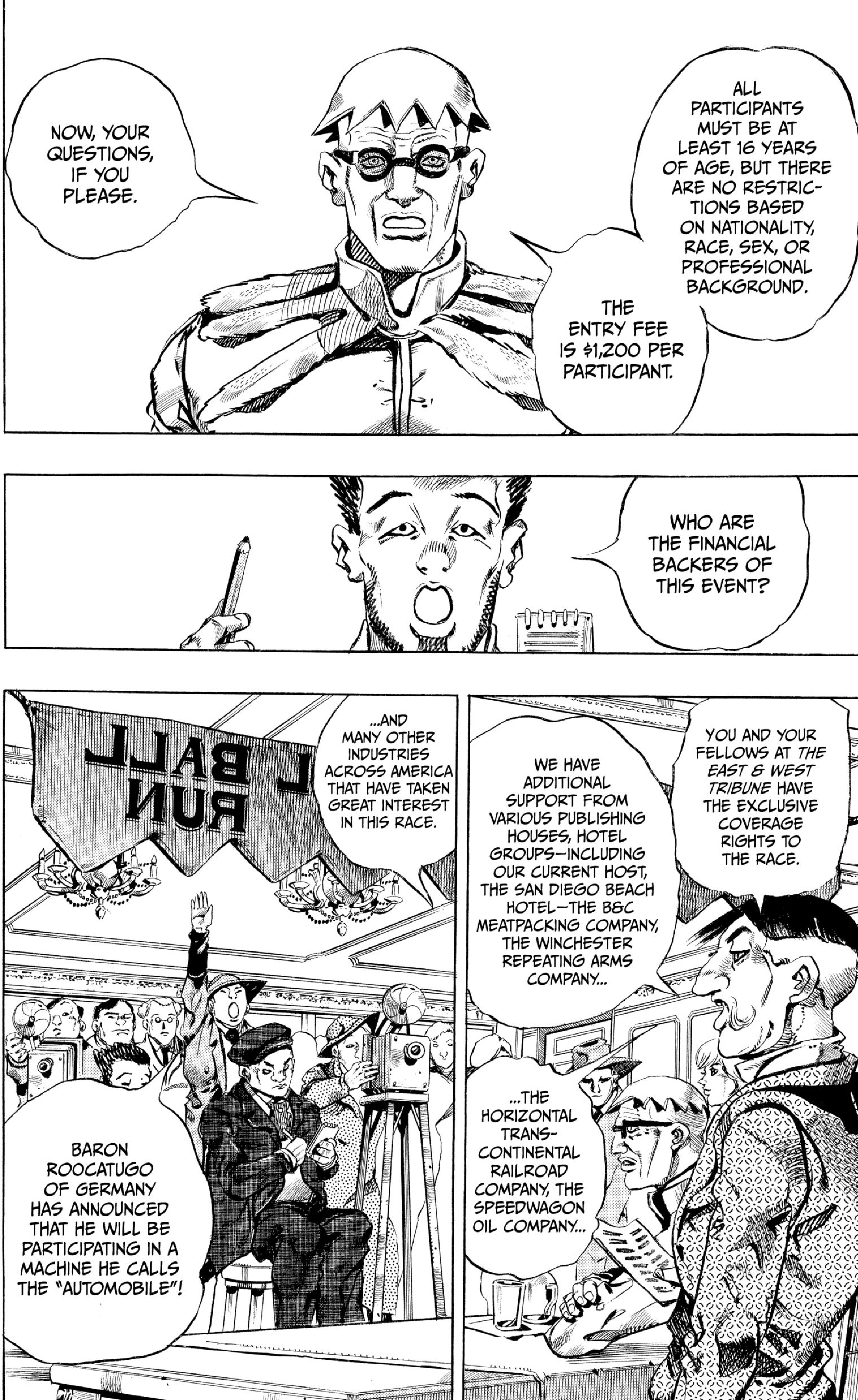

OKAY, I'LL TRY MY BEST.
THERE, THERE.

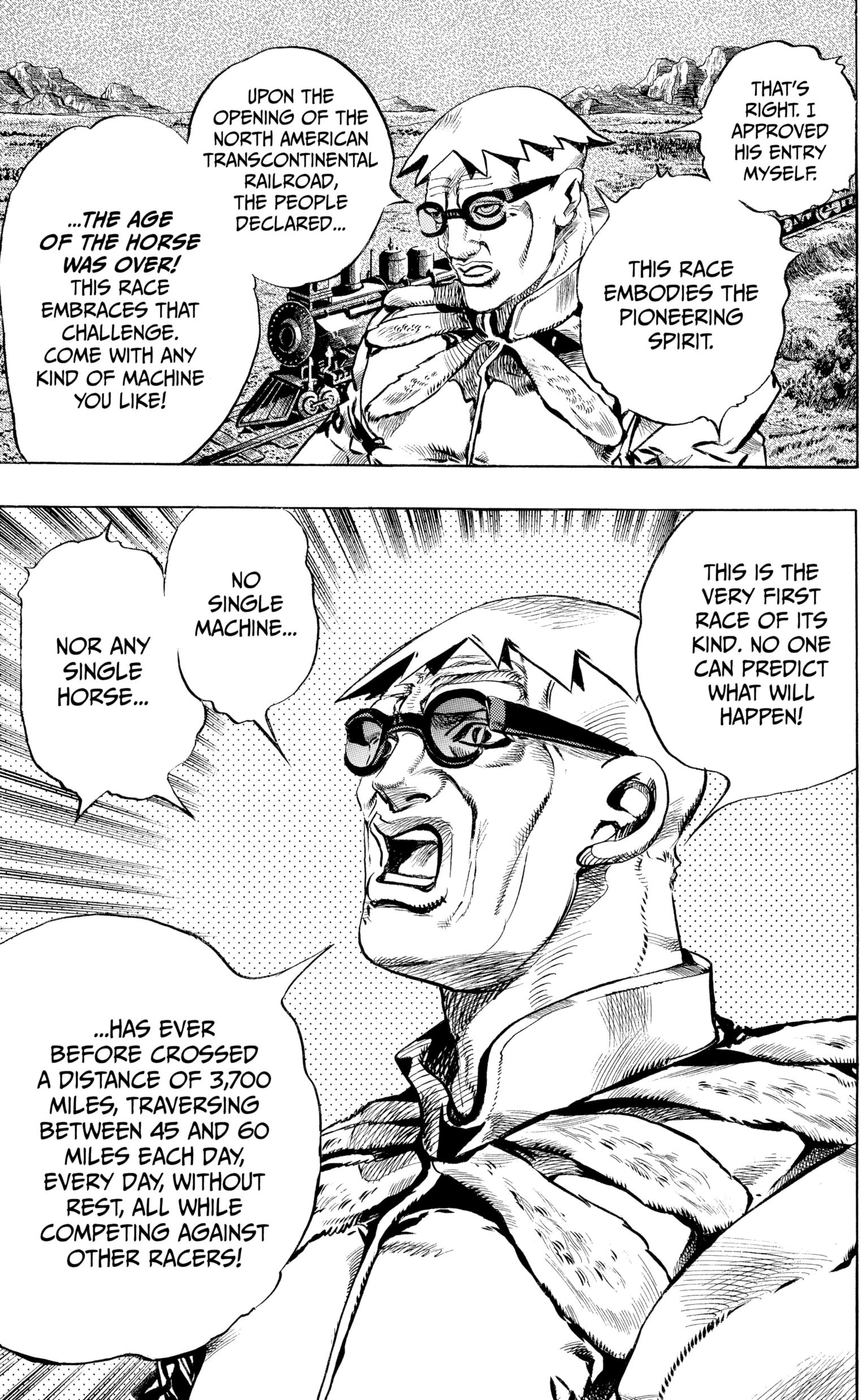

MR. STEVEN STEEL!
WOULD YOU PLEASE GIVE US A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE ***STEEL BALL RUN*** RACE THAT WILL BE TAKING PLACE TWO DAYS FROM NOW?
I KNOW YOU'VE GONE OVER THIS BEFORE, BUT IF YOU DON'T MIND, PLEASE DO US THE HONOR ONCE MORE FOR OUR NEWSPAPER READERS AROUND THE WORLD!
AFTER THAT, WE'LL TAKE SOME QUESTIONS.

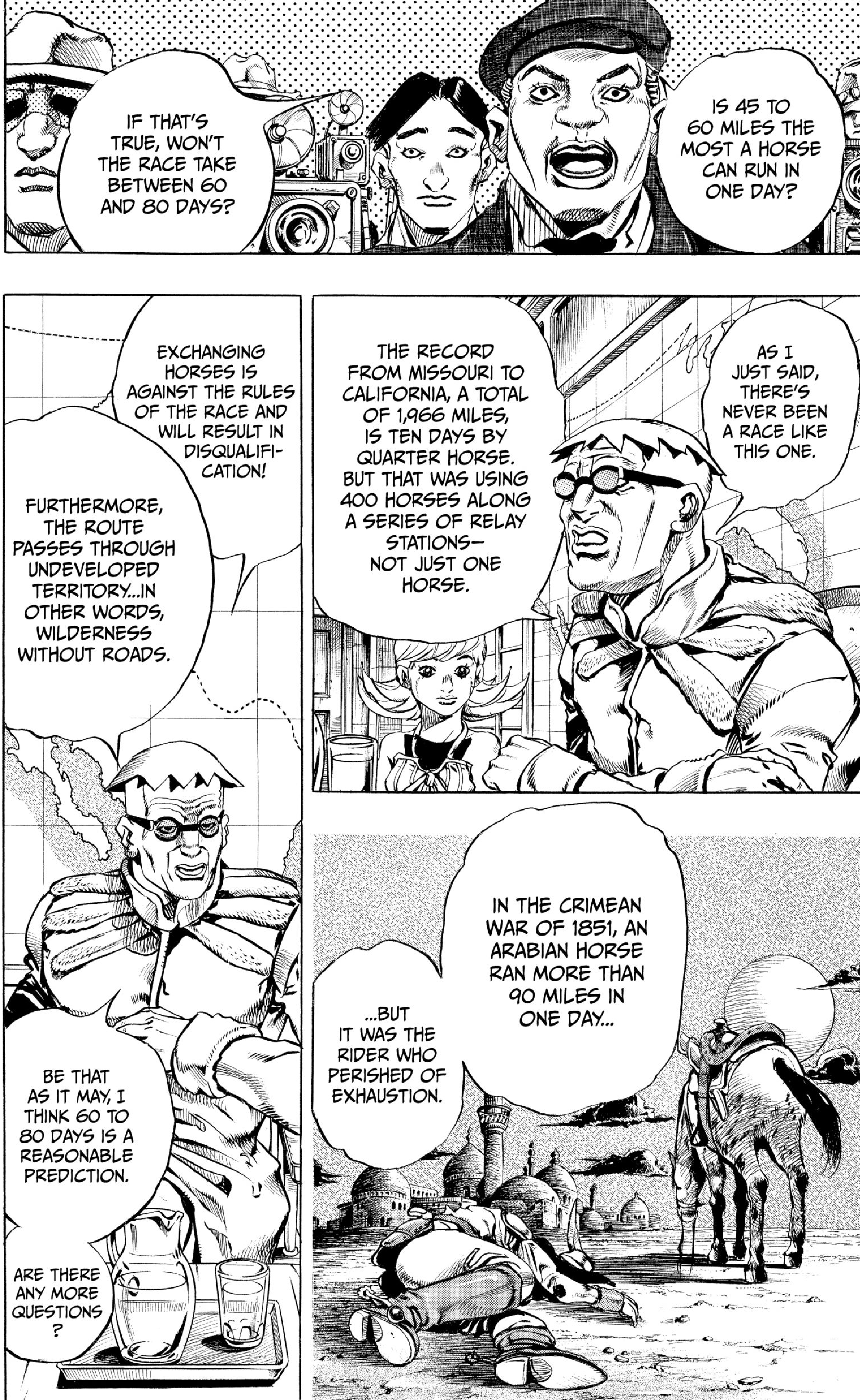

SAN DIEGO
STEEL BALL RUN
1890
KA-CLIK
KA-CLIK
KA-CLIK
KA-CLIK
KA-CLIK
KA-CLIK

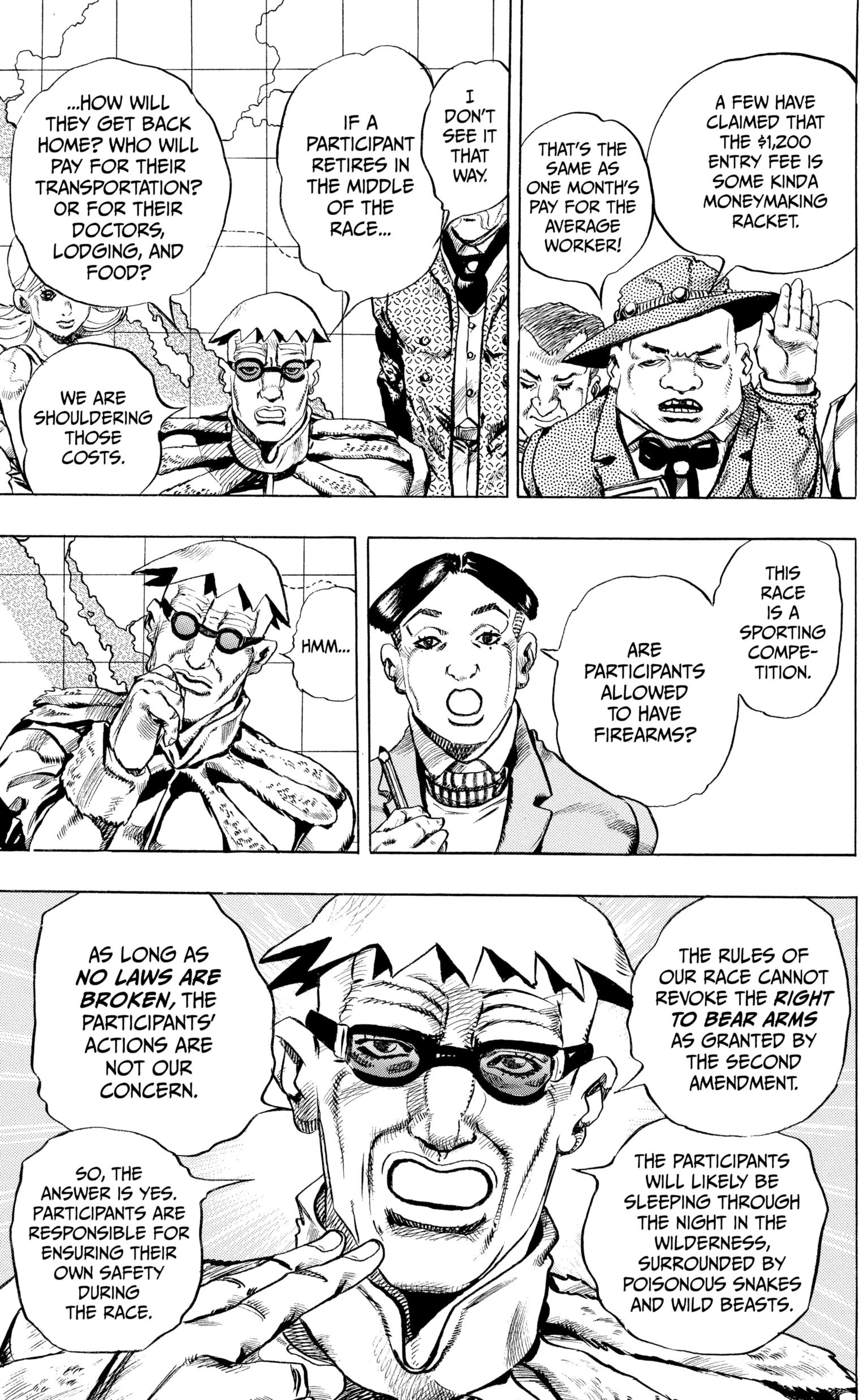
THE STEEL BALL RUN RACE WILL BEGIN AT 10 A.M. ON SEPTEMBER 25, 1890, WHERE THE PACIFIC OCEAN MEETS THE BEACH IN SAN DIEGO.
NEW YORK
SAN DIEGO
THE FINISH LINE IS IN NEW YORK CITY, WHICH DISTINGUISHES THIS RACE AS THE FIRST NORTH AMERICAN TRANSCONTINENTAL HORSEBACK RACE IN HUMAN HISTORY!

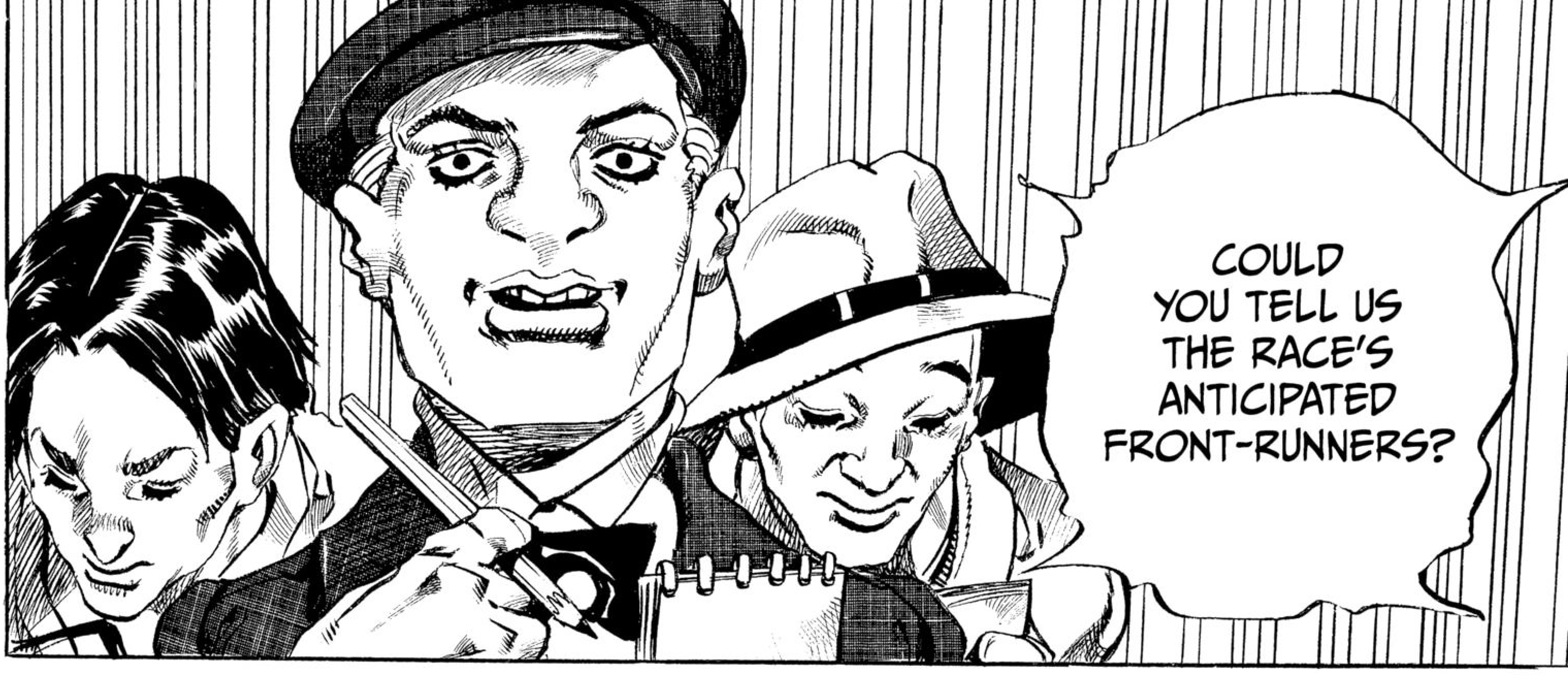
THE DISTANCE IS ROUGHLY 3,700 MILES!
IF OUR RIDERS FOLLOW THE ROUTE BEHIND ME, THAT IS.
THE GRAND CHAMPION WILL RECEIVE A PRIZE OF 50 MILLION U.S. DOLLARS TO BE DEPOSITED INTO THEIR OWN PERSONAL ACCOUNT WITH THE EAST AND WEST BANK.
SECOND PLACE WILL RECEIVE $1 MILLION; THIRD, $500,000; FOURTH, $250,000; FIFTH, $120,000; AND SO ON THROUGH TENTH PLACE. THERE ARE ALSO VARIOUS MINOR PRIZES, INCLUDING FOR PLACEMENTS AT EACH CHECKPOINT, AND ET CETERA.
PLEASE CONSULT THE OFFICIAL RULEBOOK FOR DETAILS.

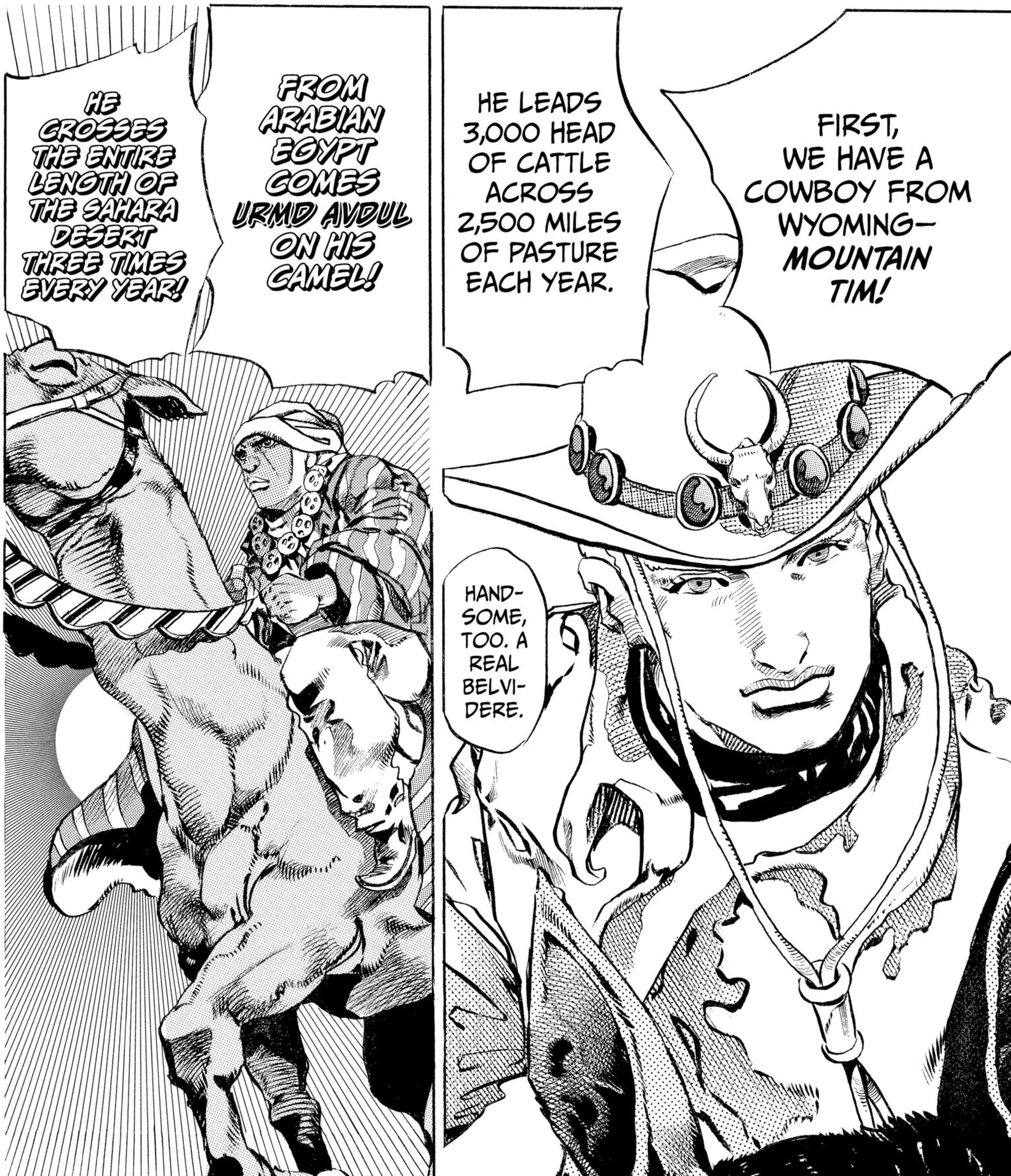

ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST BE AT LEAST 16 YEARS OF AGE, BUT THERE ARE NO RESTRICTIONS BASED ON NATIONALITY, RACE, SEX, OR PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND.
THE ENTRY FEE IS $1,200 PER PARTICIPANT.
NOW, YOUR QUESTIONS, IF YOU PLEASE.
WHO ARE THE FINANCIAL BACKERS OF THIS EVENT?
YOU AND YOUR FELLOWS AT *THE EAST & WEST TRIBUNE* HAVE THE EXCLUSIVE COVERAGE RIGHTS TO THE RACE.
WE HAVE ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM VARIOUS PUBLISHING HOUSES, HOTEL GROUPS—INCLUDING OUR CURRENT HOST, THE SAN DIEGO BEACH HOTEL—THE B&C MEATPACKING COMPANY, THE WINCHESTER REPEATING ARMS COMPANY...
...THE HORIZONTAL TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD COMPANY, THE SPEEDWAGON OIL COMPANY...
...AND MANY OTHER INDUSTRIES ACROSS AMERICA THAT HAVE TAKEN GREAT INTEREST IN THIS RACE.
BARON ROOCATUGO OF GERMANY HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN A MACHINE HE CALLS THE "AUTOMOBILE"!

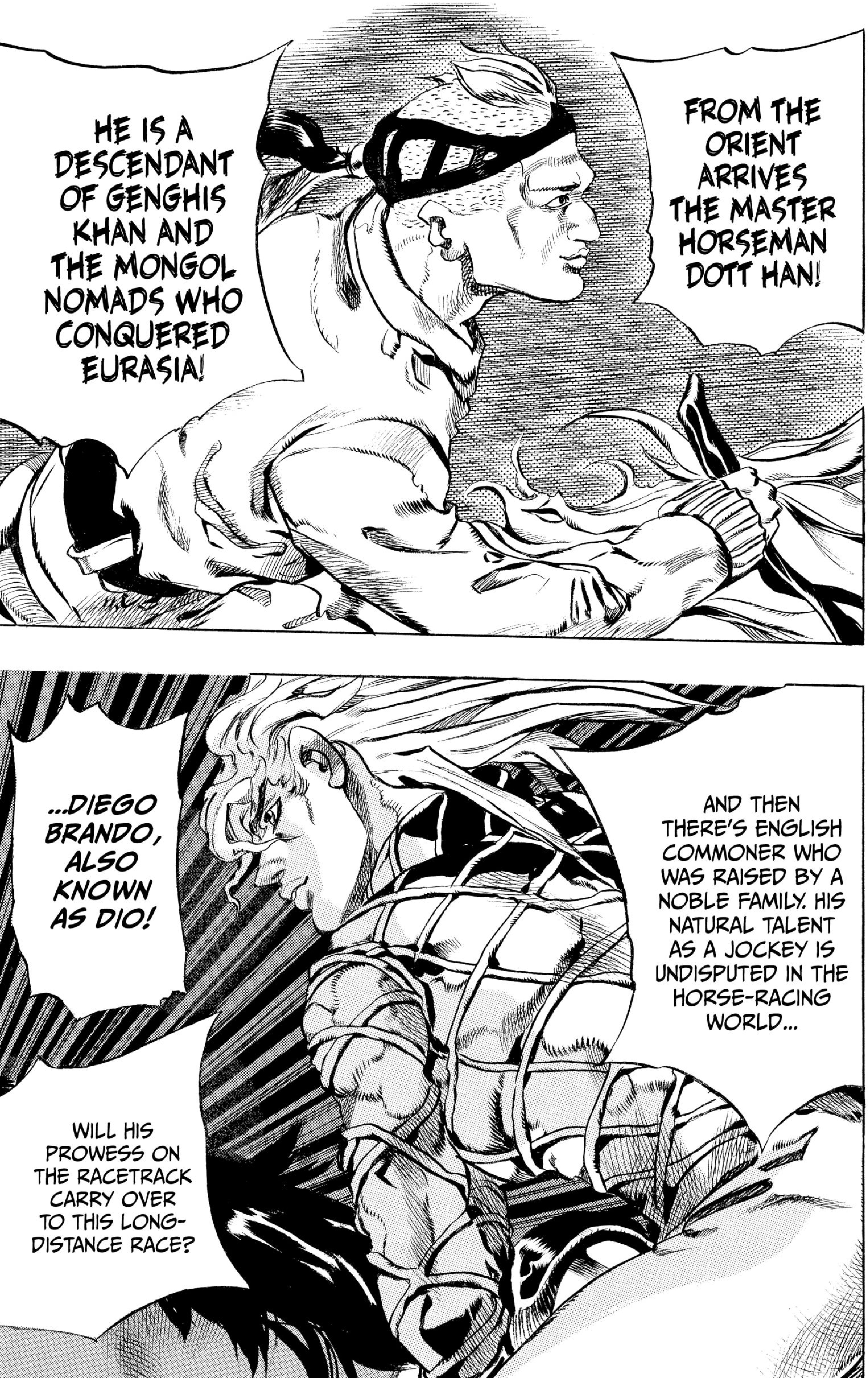

THAT'S RIGHT. I APPROVED HIS ENTRY MYSELF.
THIS RACE EMBODIES THE PIONEERING SPIRIT.
UPON THE OPENING OF THE NORTH AMERICAN TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD, THE PEOPLE DECLARED...
...THE AGE OF THE HORSE WAS OVER! THIS RACE EMBRACES THAT CHALLENGE. COME WITH ANY KIND OF MACHINE YOU LIKE!
THIS IS THE VERY FIRST RACE OF ITS KIND. NO ONE CAN PREDICT WHAT WILL HAPPEN!
NO SINGLE MACHINE...
NOR ANY SINGLE HORSE...
...HAS EVER BEFORE CROSSED A DISTANCE OF 3,700 MILES, TRAVERSING BETWEEN 45 AND 60 MILES EACH DAY, EVERY DAY, WITHOUT REST, ALL WHILE COMPETING AGAINST OTHER RACERS!

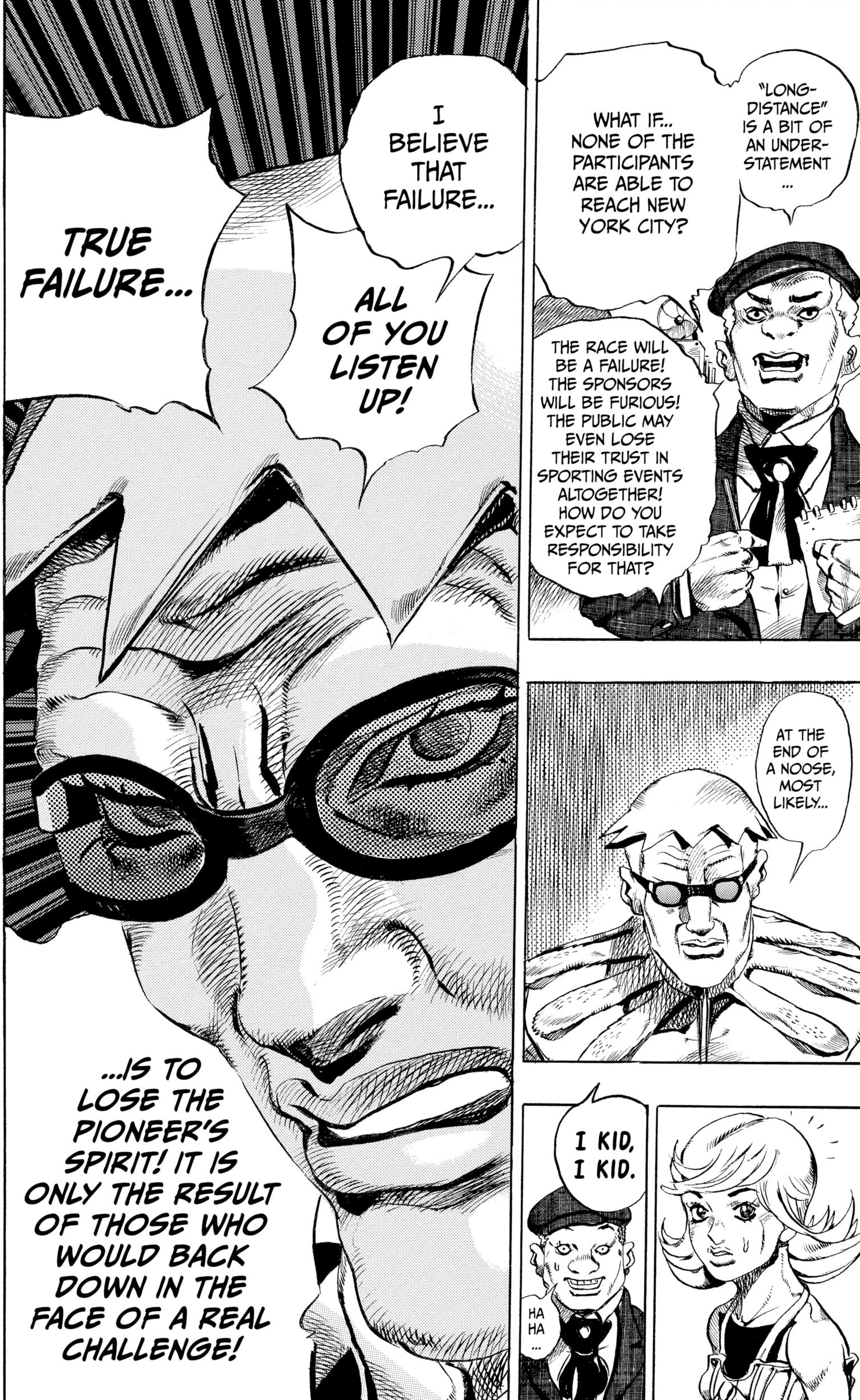

IS 45 TO 60 MILES THE MOST A HORSE CAN RUN IN ONE DAY?
IF THAT'S TRUE, WON'T THE RACE TAKE BETWEEN 60 AND 80 DAYS?
AS I JUST SAID, THERE'S NEVER BEEN A RACE LIKE THIS ONE.
THE RECORD FROM MISSOURI TO CALIFORNIA, A TOTAL OF 1,966 MILES, IS TEN DAYS BY QUARTER HORSE. BUT THAT WAS USING 400 HORSES ALONG A SERIES OF RELAY STATIONS— NOT JUST ONE HORSE.
EXCHANGING HORSES IS AGAINST THE RULES OF THE RACE AND WILL RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION!
FURTHERMORE, THE ROUTE PASSES THROUGH UNDEVELOPED TERRITORY...IN OTHER WORDS, WILDERNESS WITHOUT ROADS.
IN THE CRIMEAN WAR OF 1851, AN ARABIAN HORSE RAN MORE THAN 90 MILES IN ONE DAY...
...BUT IT WAS THE RIDER WHO PERISHED OF EXHAUSTION.
BE THAT AS IT MAY, I THINK 60 TO 80 DAYS IS A REASONABLE PREDICTION.
ARE THERE ANY MORE QUESTIONS?

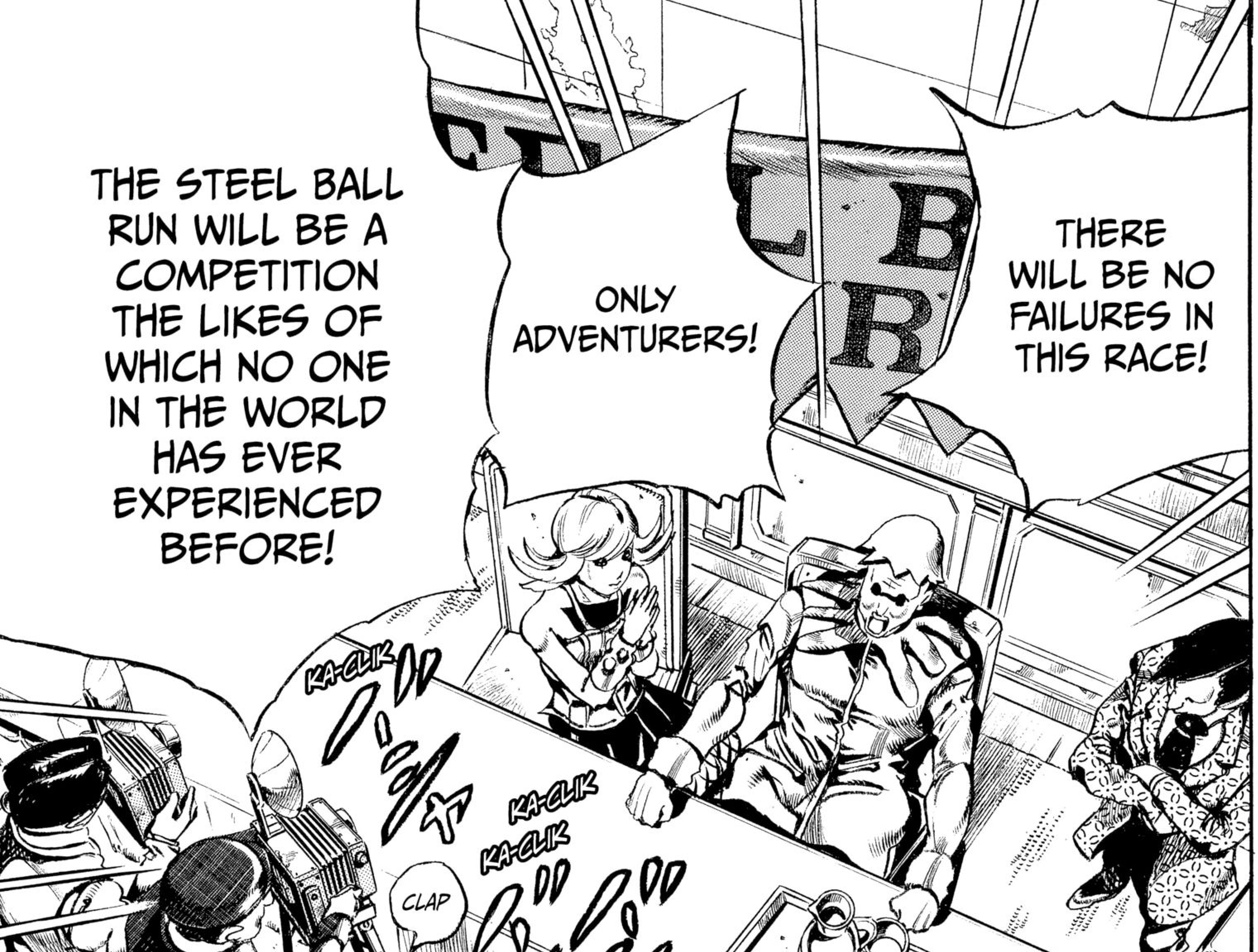

A FEW HAVE CLAIMED THAT THE $1,200 ENTRY FEE IS SOME KINDA MONEYMAKING RACKET.
THAT'S THE SAME AS ONE MONTH'S PAY FOR THE AVERAGE WORKER!
I DON'T SEE IT THAT WAY.
IF A PARTICIPANT RETIRES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE RACE...
...HOW WILL THEY GET BACK HOME? WHO WILL PAY FOR THEIR TRANSPORTATION? OR FOR THEIR DOCTORS, LODGING, AND FOOD?
WE ARE SHOULDERING THOSE COSTS.
THIS RACE IS A SPORTING COMPETITION.
ARE PARTICIPANTS ALLOWED TO HAVE FIREARMS?
HMM...
THE RULES OF OUR RACE CANNOT REVOKE THE ***RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS*** AS GRANTED BY THE SECOND AMENDMENT.
AS LONG AS ***NO LAWS ARE BROKEN,*** THE PARTICIPANTS' ACTIONS ARE NOT OUR CONCERN.
THE PARTICIPANTS WILL LIKELY BE SLEEPING THROUGH THE NIGHT IN THE WILDERNESS, SURROUNDED BY POISONOUS SNAKES AND WILD BEASTS.
SO, THE ANSWER IS YES. PARTICIPANTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THEIR OWN SAFETY DURING THE RACE.

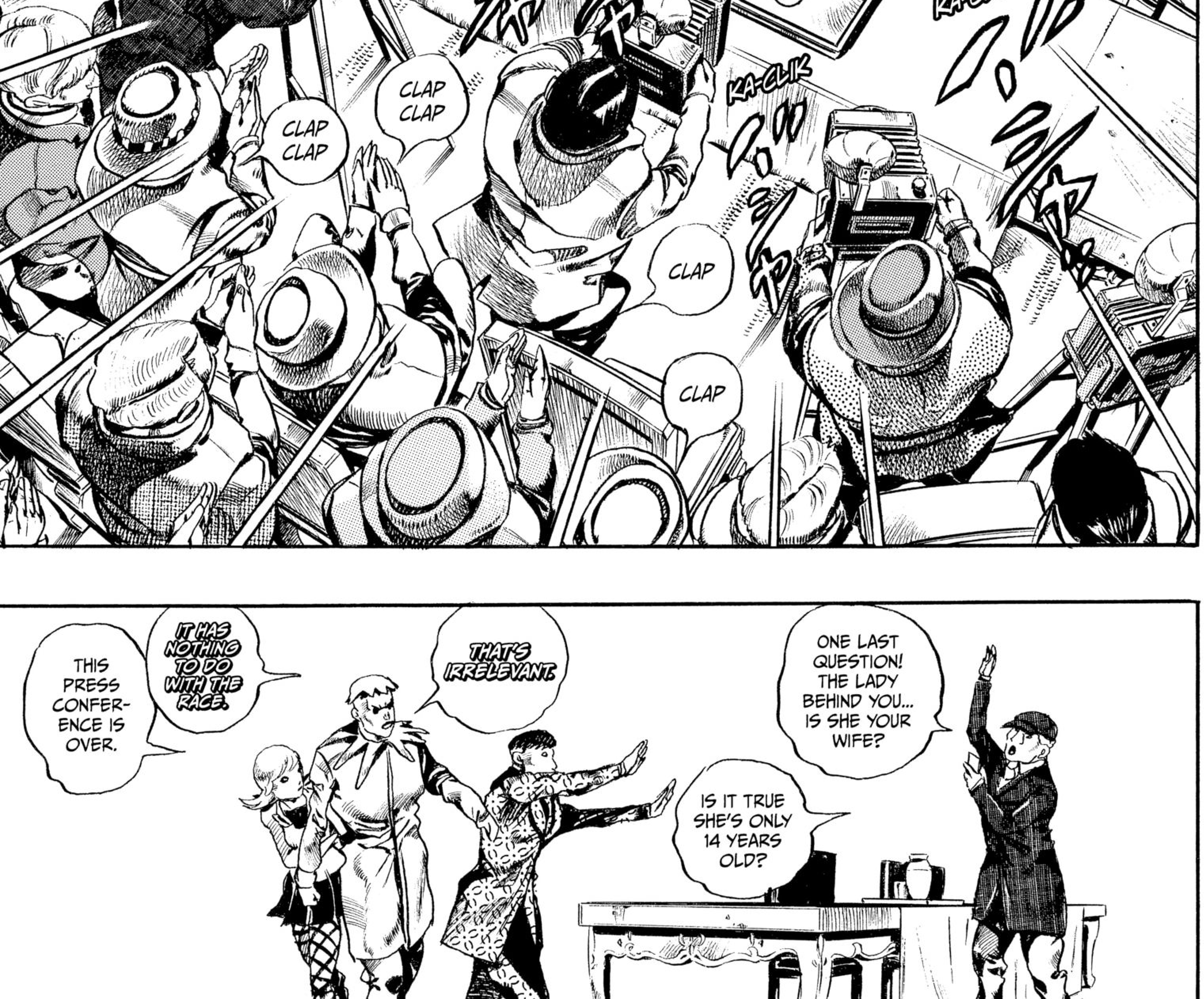

COULD YOU TELL US THE RACE'S ANTICIPATED FRONT-RUNNERS?

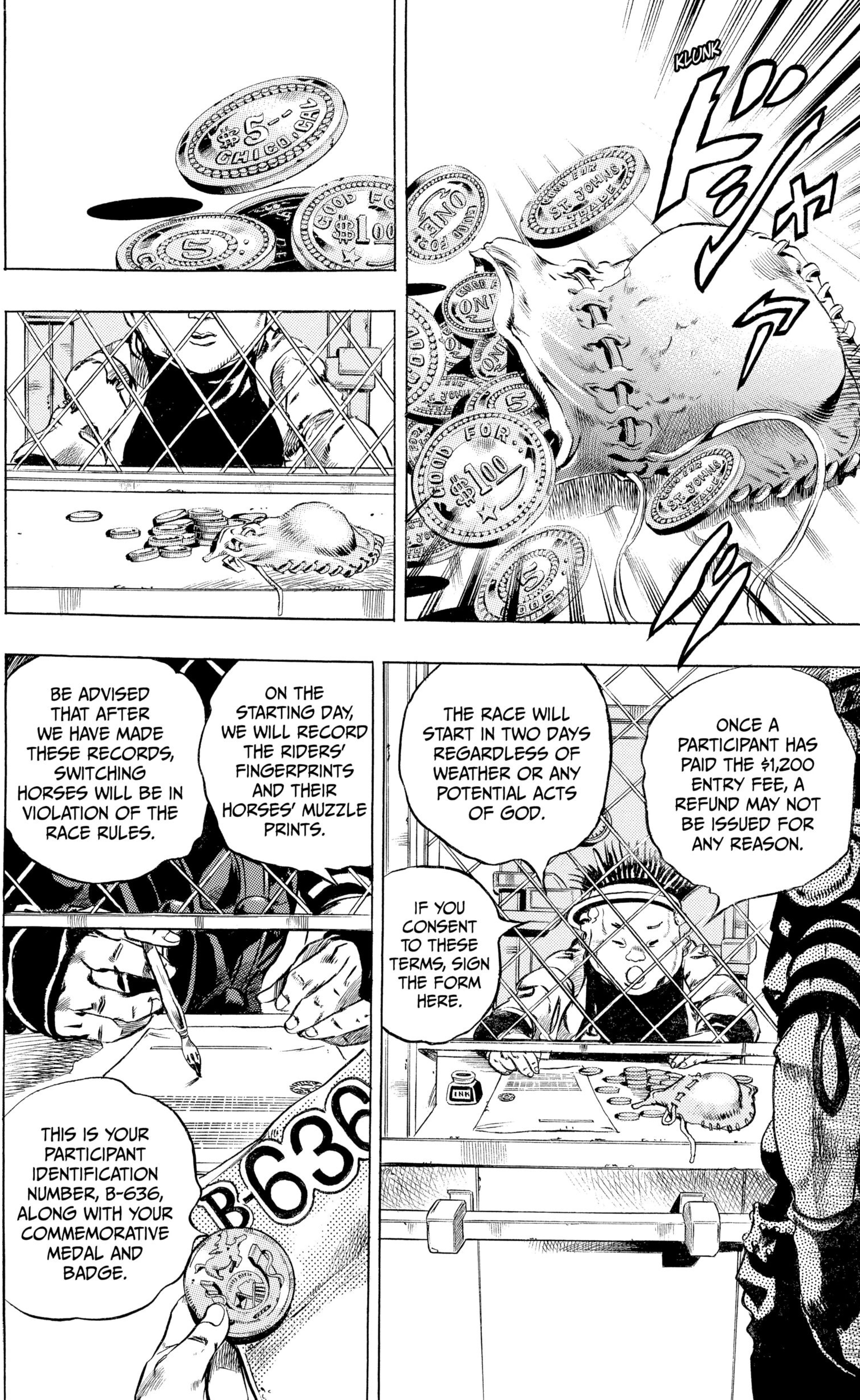

FIRST, WE HAVE A COWBOY FROM WYOMING—*MOUNTAIN TIM!*
HE LEADS 3,000 HEAD OF CATTLE ACROSS 2,500 MILES OF PASTURE EACH YEAR.
HANDSOME, TOO. A REAL BELVIDERE.
FROM ARABIAN EGYPT COMES URMD AVDUL ON HIS CAMEL!
HE CROSSES THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE SAHARA DESERT THREE TIMES EVERY YEAR!

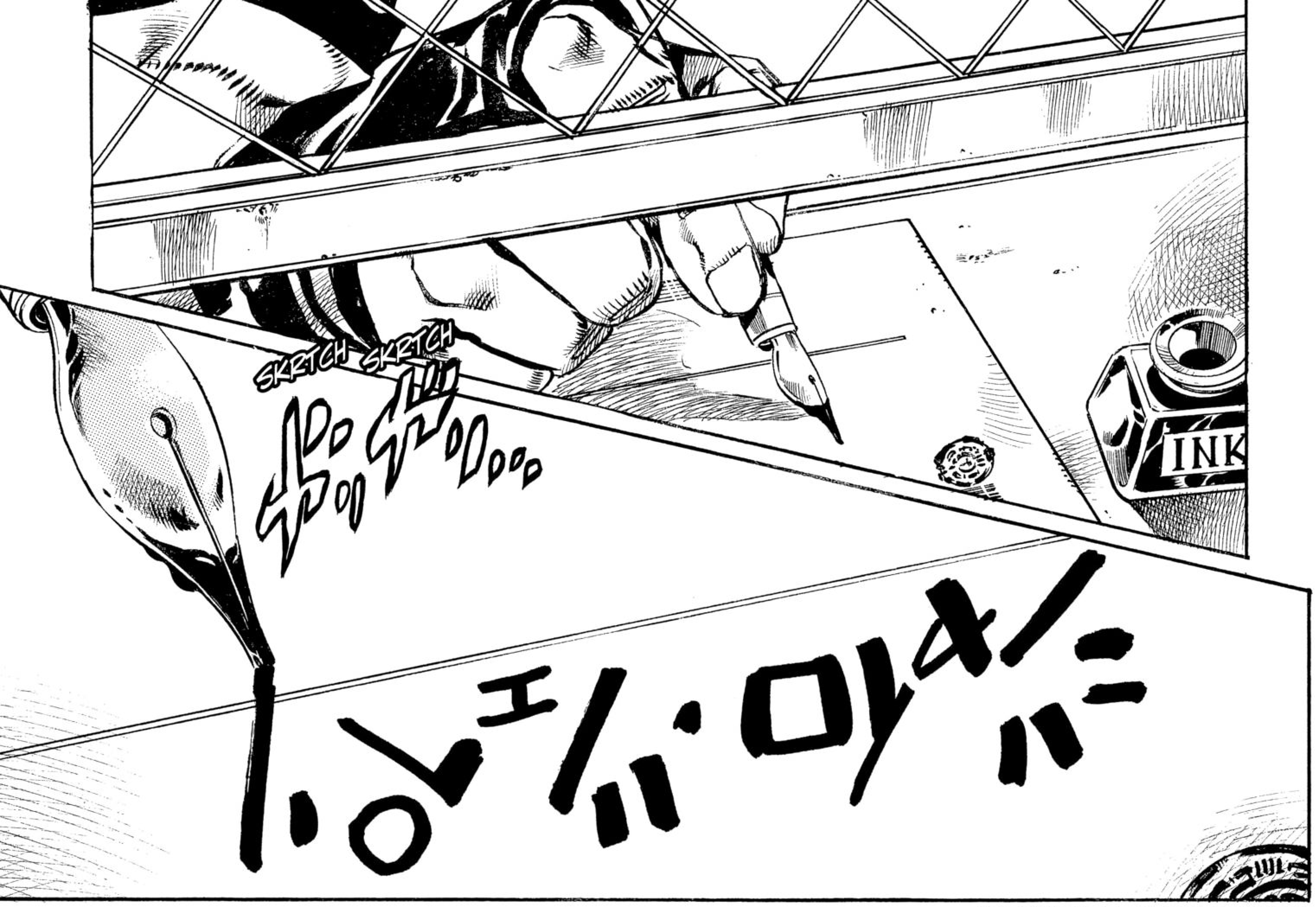

FROM THE ORIENT ARRIVES THE MASTER HORSEMAN DOTT HAN!
HE IS A DESCENDANT OF GENGHIS KHAN AND THE MONGOL NOMADS WHO CONQUERED EURASIA!
AND THEN THERE'S ENGLISH COMMONER WHO WAS RAISED BY A NOBLE FAMILY. HIS NATURAL TALENT AS A JOCKEY IS UNDISPUTED IN THE HORSE-RACING WORLD...
...DIEGO BRANDO, ALSO KNOWN AS DIO!
WILL HIS PROWESS ON THE RACETRACK CARRY OVER TO THIS LONG-DISTANCE RACE?


"LONG-DISTANCE" IS A BIT OF AN UNDERSTATEMENT ...
WHAT IF... NONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS ARE ABLE TO REACH NEW YORK CITY?
THE RACE WILL BE A FAILURE! THE SPONSORS WILL BE FURIOUS! THE PUBLIC MAY EVEN LOSE THEIR TRUST IN SPORTING EVENTS ALTOGETHER! HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THAT?
AT THE END OF A NOOSE, MOST LIKELY...
I KID, I KID.
HA HA ...
I BELIEVE THAT FAILURE...
TRUE FAILURE...
ALL OF YOU LISTEN UP!
...IS TO LOSE THE PIONEER'S SPIRIT! IT IS ONLY THE RESULT OF THOSE WHO WOULD BACK DOWN IN THE FACE OF A REAL CHALLENGE!

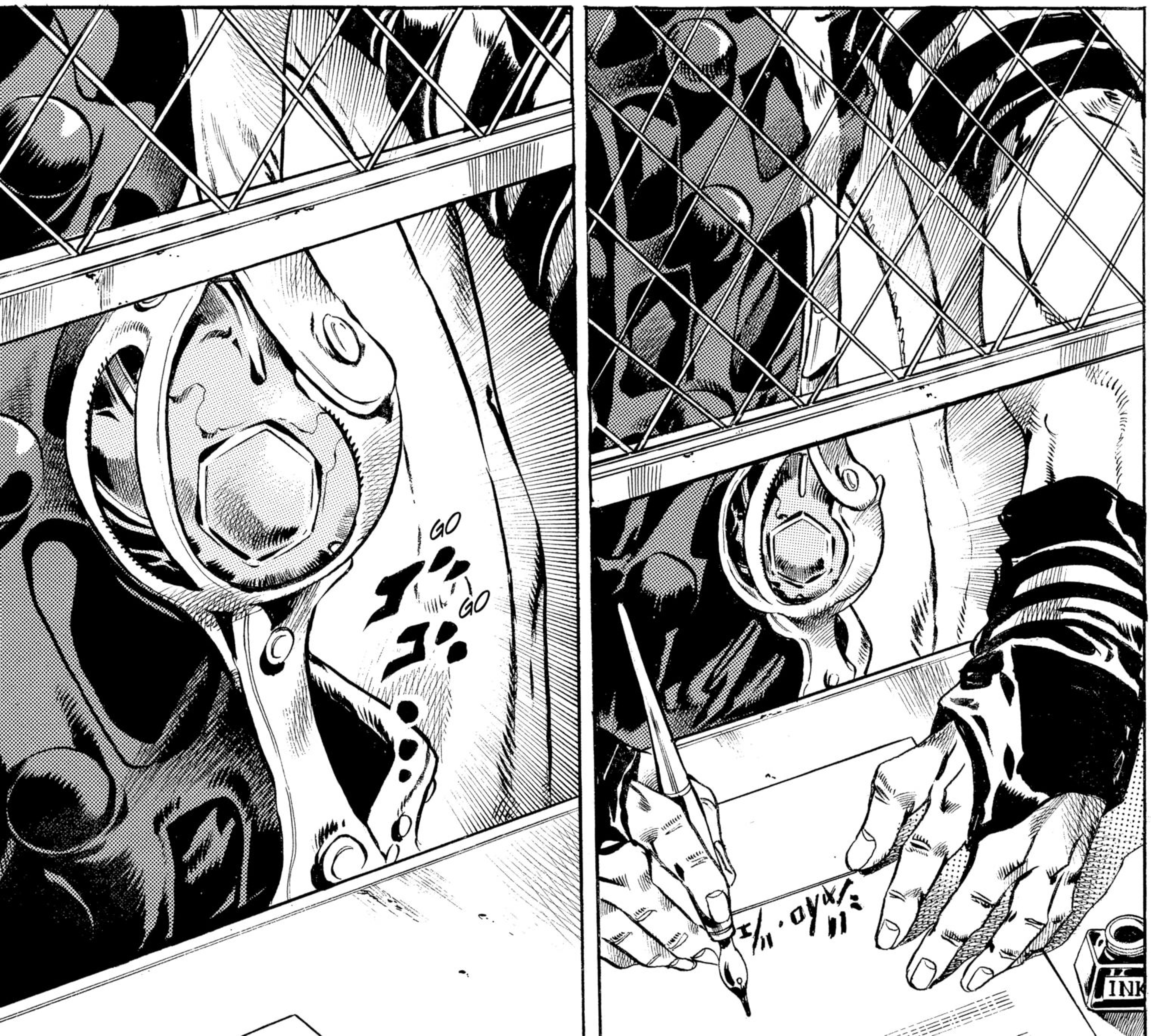

THERE WILL BE NO FAILURES IN THIS RACE!
ONLY ADVENTURERS!
THE STEEL BALL RUN WILL BE A COMPETITION THE LIKES OF WHICH NO ONE IN THE WORLD HAS EVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE!
KA-CLIK
KA-CLIK
KA-CLIK
KA-CLIK
KA-CLIK
CLAP
CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP
CLAP
CLAP

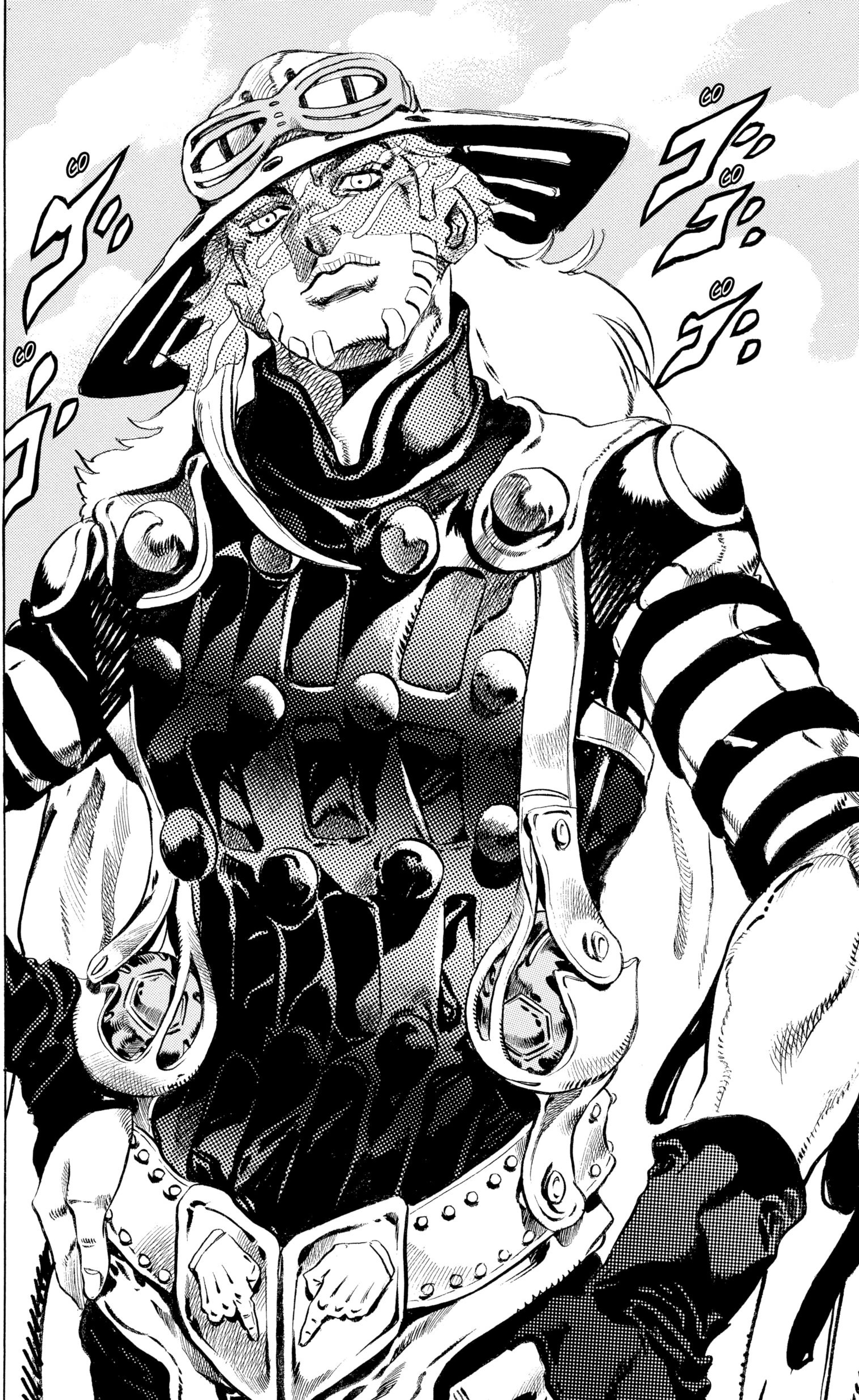

ONE LAST QUESTION! THE LADY BEHIND YOU... IS SHE YOUR WIFE?
IS IT TRUE SHE'S ONLY 14 YEARS OLD?
THAT'S IRRELEVANT.
IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE RACE.
THIS PRESS CONFERENCE IS OVER.

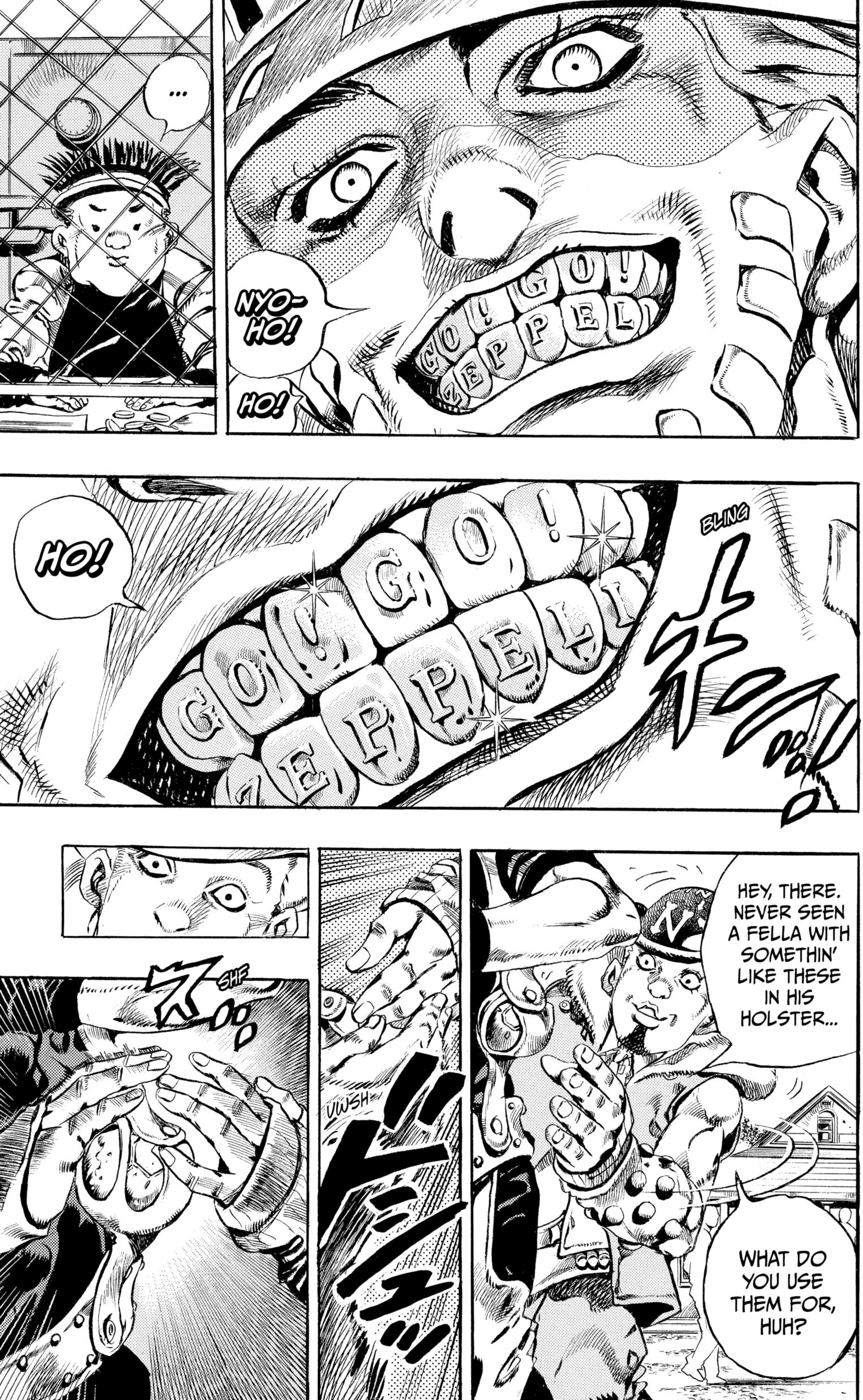

KLUNK
ドシャア
GOOD FOR ONE
ST. JOHNS
GOOD FOR $1.00
$5 CHICO, CAL
GOOD FOR $1.00
ONCE A PARTICIPANT HAS PAID THE $1,200 ENTRY FEE, A REFUND MAY NOT BE ISSUED FOR ANY REASON.
THE RACE WILL START IN TWO DAYS REGARDLESS OF WEATHER OR ANY POTENTIAL ACTS OF GOD.
IF YOU CONSENT TO THESE TERMS, SIGN THE FORM HERE.
INK
ON THE STARTING DAY, WE WILL RECORD THE RIDERS' FINGERPRINTS AND THEIR HORSES' MUZZLE PRINTS.
BE ADVISED THAT AFTER WE HAVE MADE THESE RECORDS, SWITCHING HORSES WILL BE IN VIOLATION OF THE RACE RULES.
B-636
THIS IS YOUR PARTICIPANT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER, B-636, ALONG WITH YOUR COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL AND BADGE.

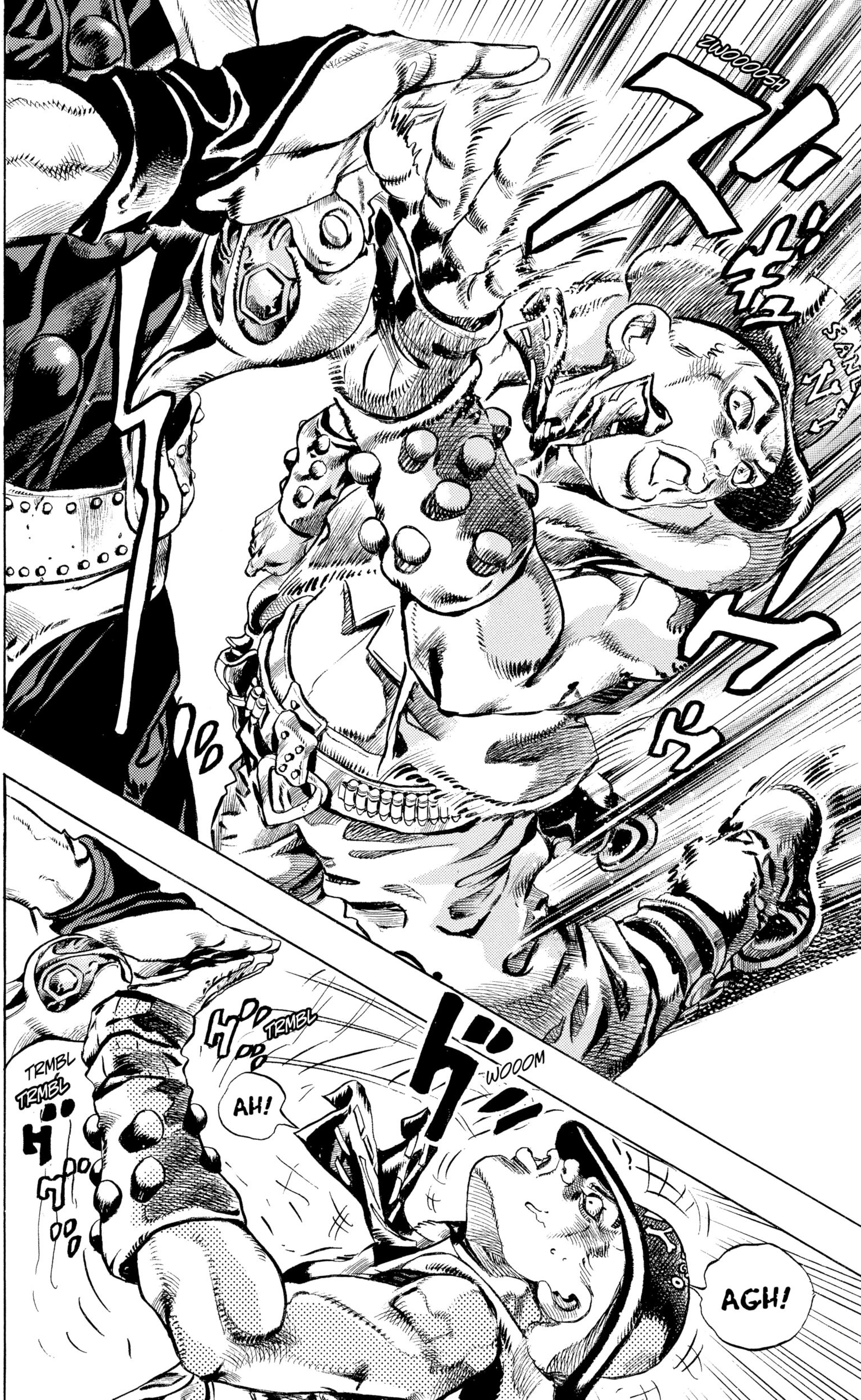

SKRTCH SKRTCH
INK

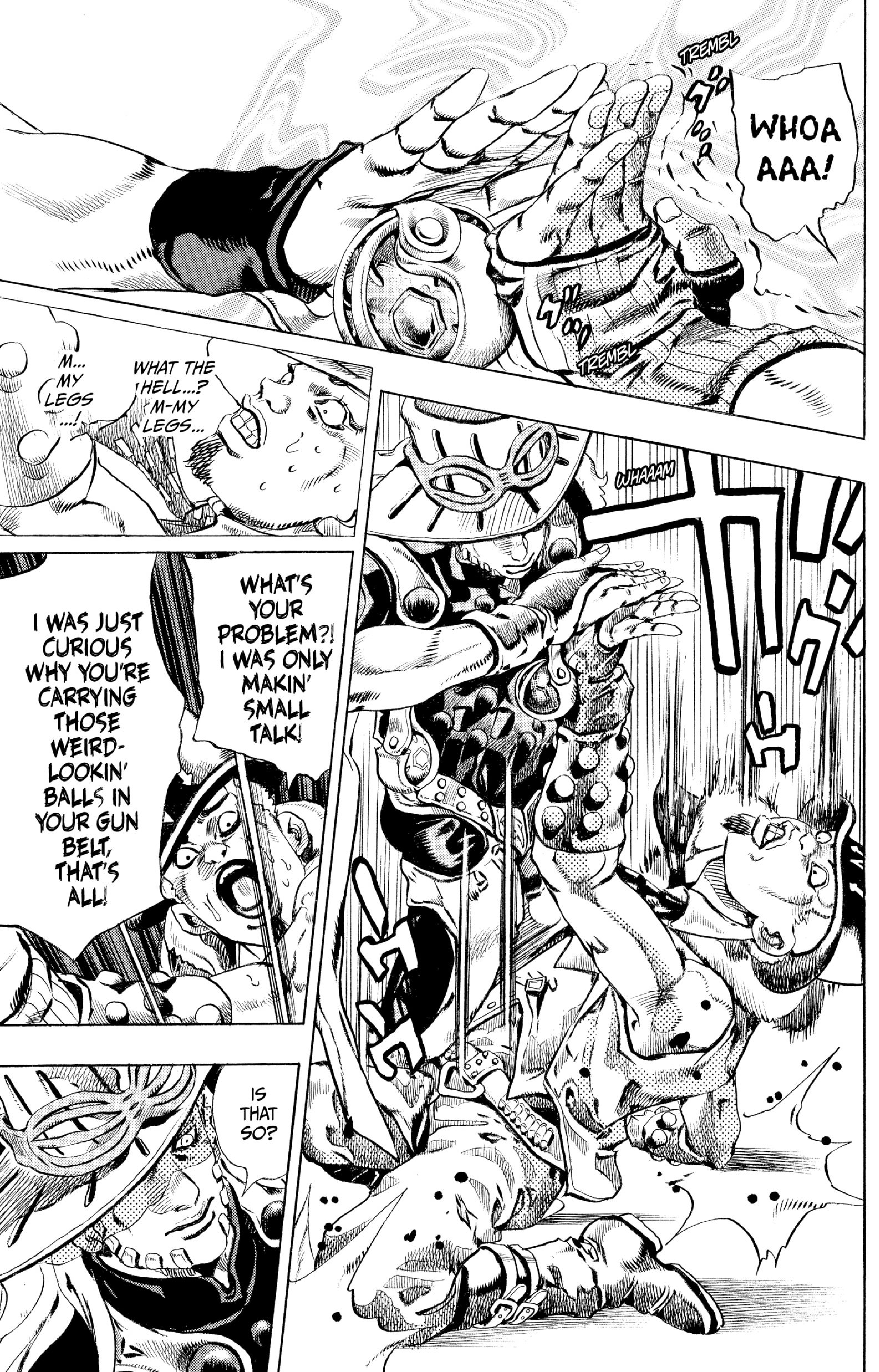
*SIGNATURE: GYRO ZEPPELI

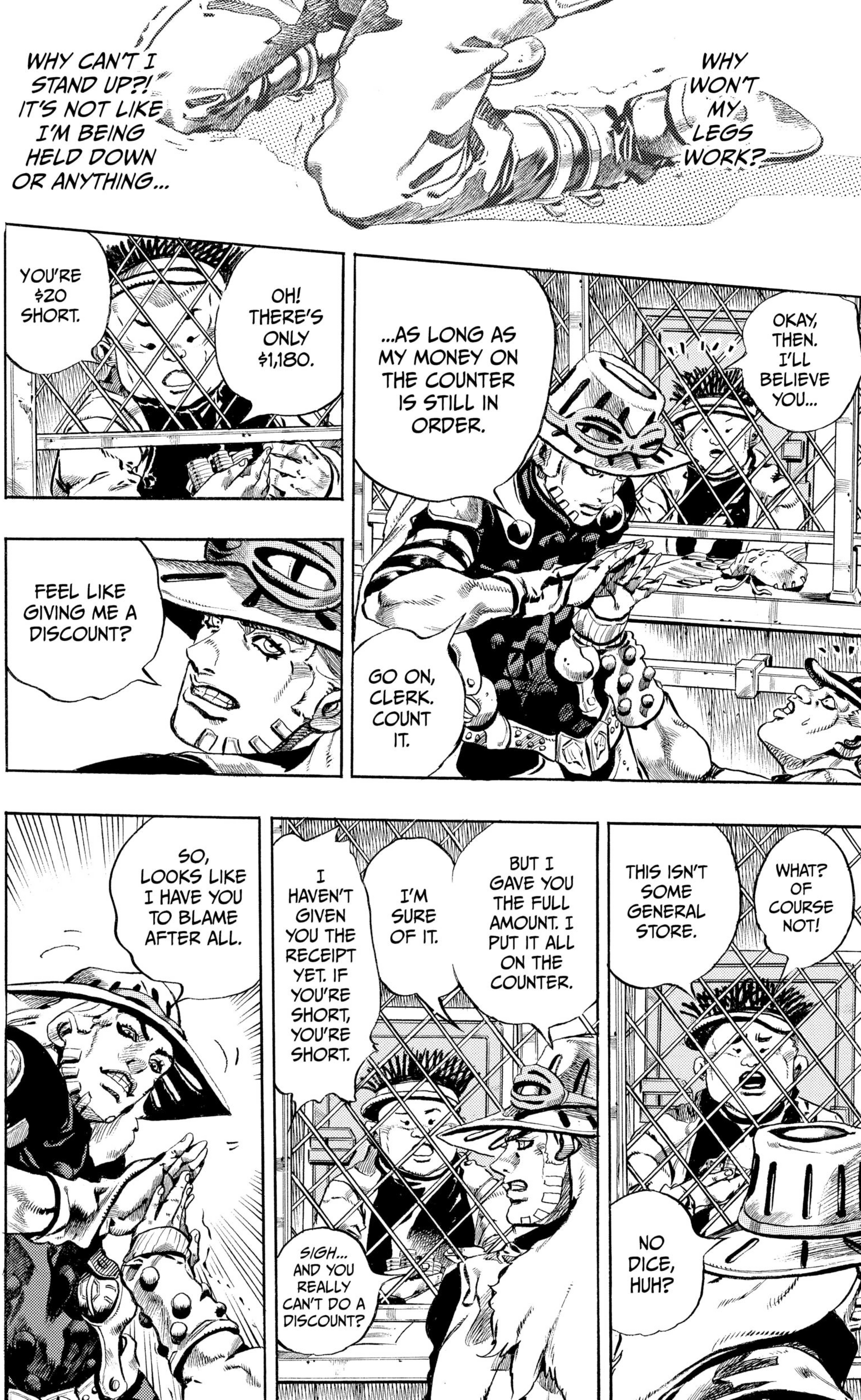


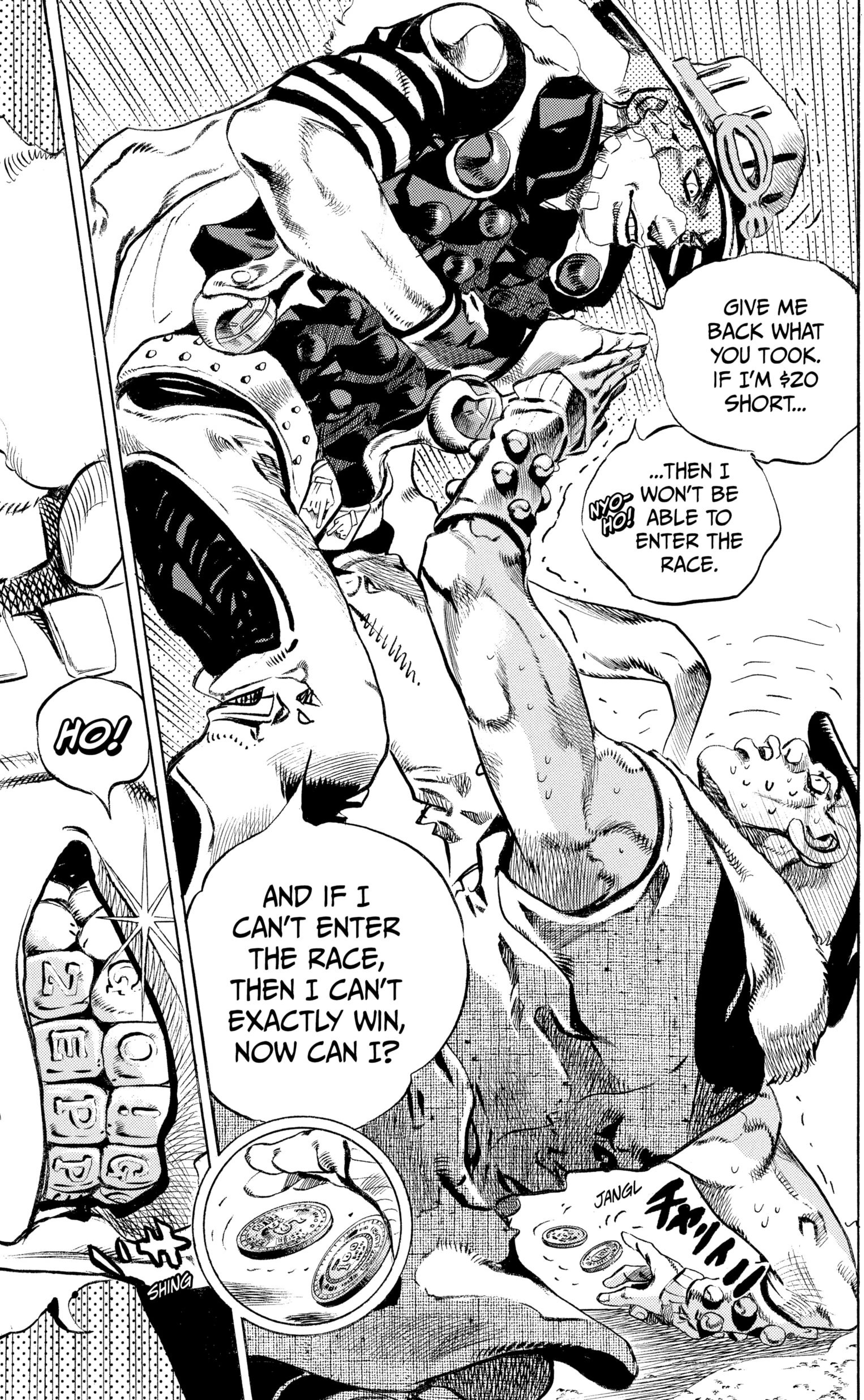

GO
ゴ
GO
ゴ
GO
ゴ
GO
ゴ
GO
ゴ


NYO-HO!
HO!
GO! GO! ZEPPELI
...
BLING
HO!
GO! GO! ZEPPELI
HEY, THERE. NEVER SEEN A FELLA WITH SOMETHIN' LIKE THESE IN HIS HOLSTER...
WHAT DO YOU USE THEM FOR, HUH?
UWSH
SHF


ZWOOOSH
AGH!
WOOOM
AH!
TRMBL
TRMBL
TRMBL


TREMBL
WHOA AAA!
TREMBL
WHAT THE HELL...? M-MY LEGS...
M... MY LEGS ...!
WHAAAM
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?! I WAS ONLY MAKIN' SMALL TALK!
I WAS JUST CURIOUS WHY YOU'RE CARRYING THOSE WEIRD-LOOKIN' BALLS IN YOUR GUN BELT, THAT'S ALL!
IS THAT SO?


WHY WON'T MY LEGS WORK?
WHY CAN'T I STAND UP?! IT'S NOT LIKE I'M BEING HELD DOWN OR ANYTHING...
OKAY, THEN. I'LL BELIEVE YOU...
...AS LONG AS MY MONEY ON THE COUNTER IS STILL IN ORDER.
GO ON, CLERK. COUNT IT.
OH! THERE'S ONLY $1,180.
YOU'RE $20 SHORT.
FEEL LIKE GIVING ME A DISCOUNT?
WHAT? OF COURSE NOT!
THIS ISN'T SOME GENERAL STORE.
NO DICE, HUH?
BUT I GAVE YOU THE FULL AMOUNT. I PUT IT ALL ON THE COUNTER.
I'M SURE OF IT.
I HAVEN'T GIVEN YOU THE RECEIPT YET. IF YOU'RE SHORT, YOU'RE SHORT.
SIGH... AND YOU REALLY CAN'T DO A DISCOUNT?
SO, LOOKS LIKE I HAVE YOU TO BLAME AFTER ALL.


GIVE ME BACK WHAT YOU TOOK. IF I'M $20 SHORT...
NYO-HO!
...THEN I WON'T BE ABLE TO ENTER THE RACE.
HO!
AND IF I CAN'T ENTER THE RACE, THEN I CAN'T EXACTLY WIN, NOW CAN I?
JANGL
SHING

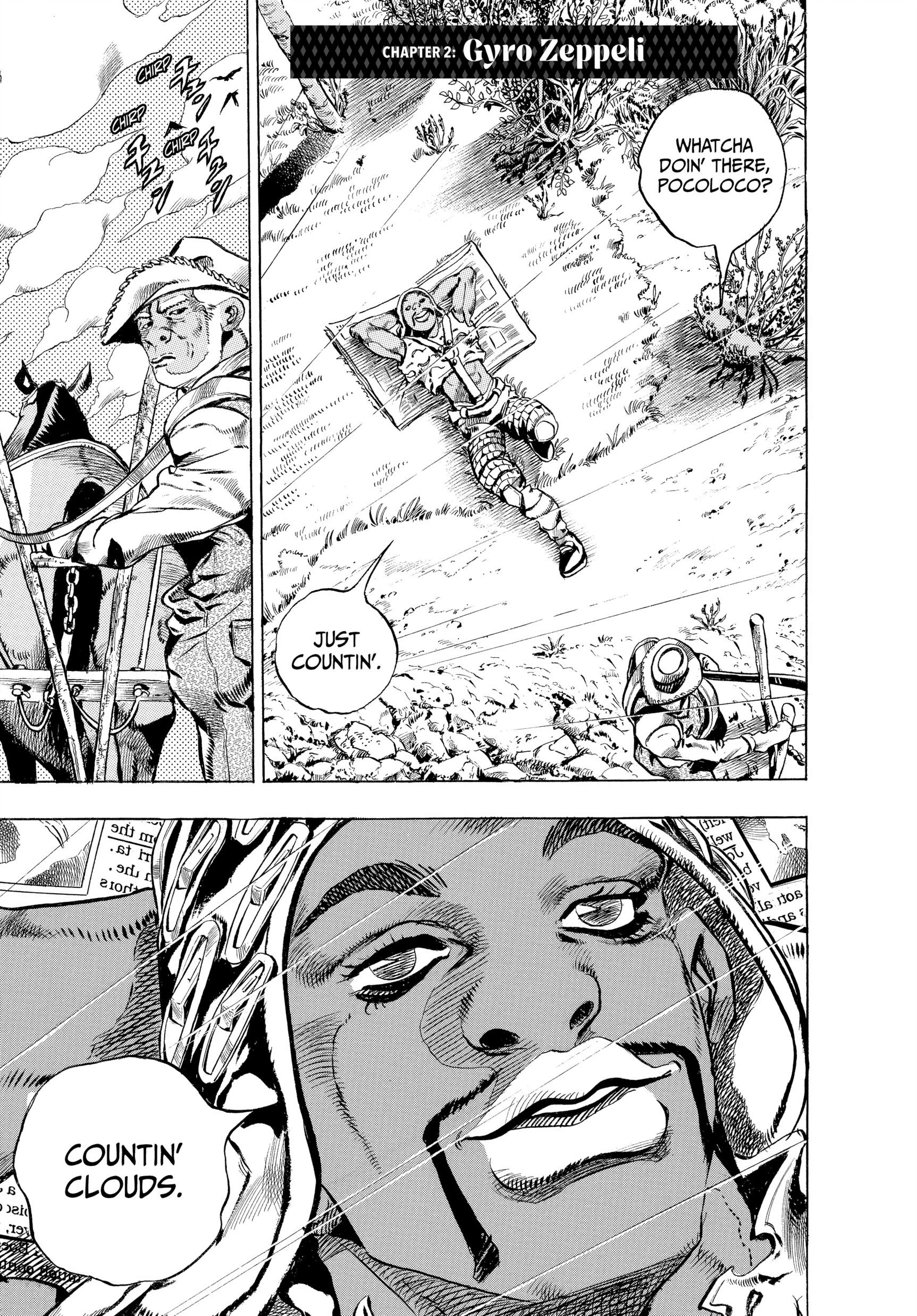
Regarding Units of Measurement

Although this story is set in America, the original Japanese publication of *Steel Ball Run* used units of measurement familiar to Japanese readers (such as kilometers for distance and kilograms for weight) so that they would have an immediate understanding of the scale involved.

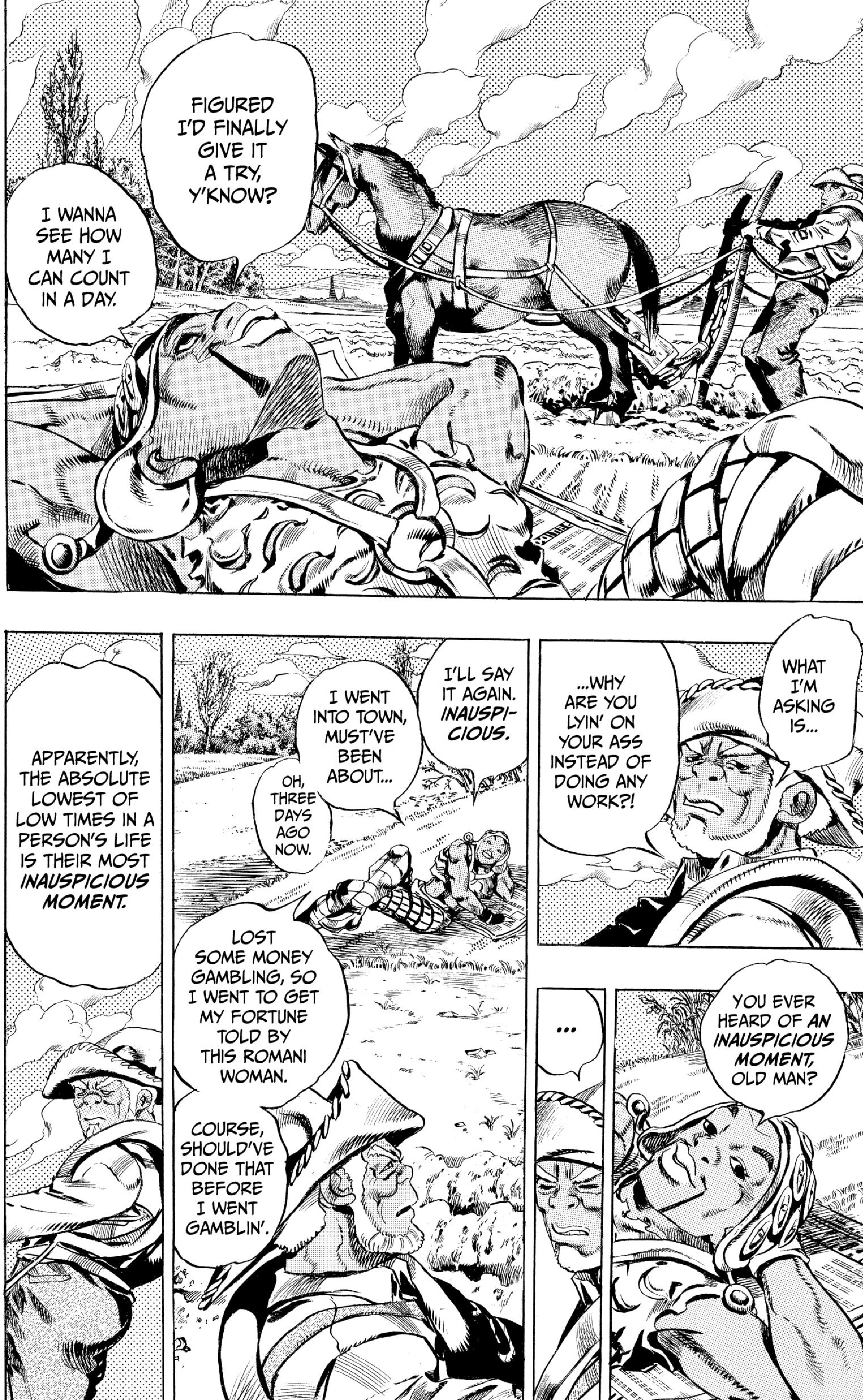
For this same reason, we have opted to use units of measurement appropriate to the setting in the English-language publication (feet, inches, miles, pounds, ounces, and so on).

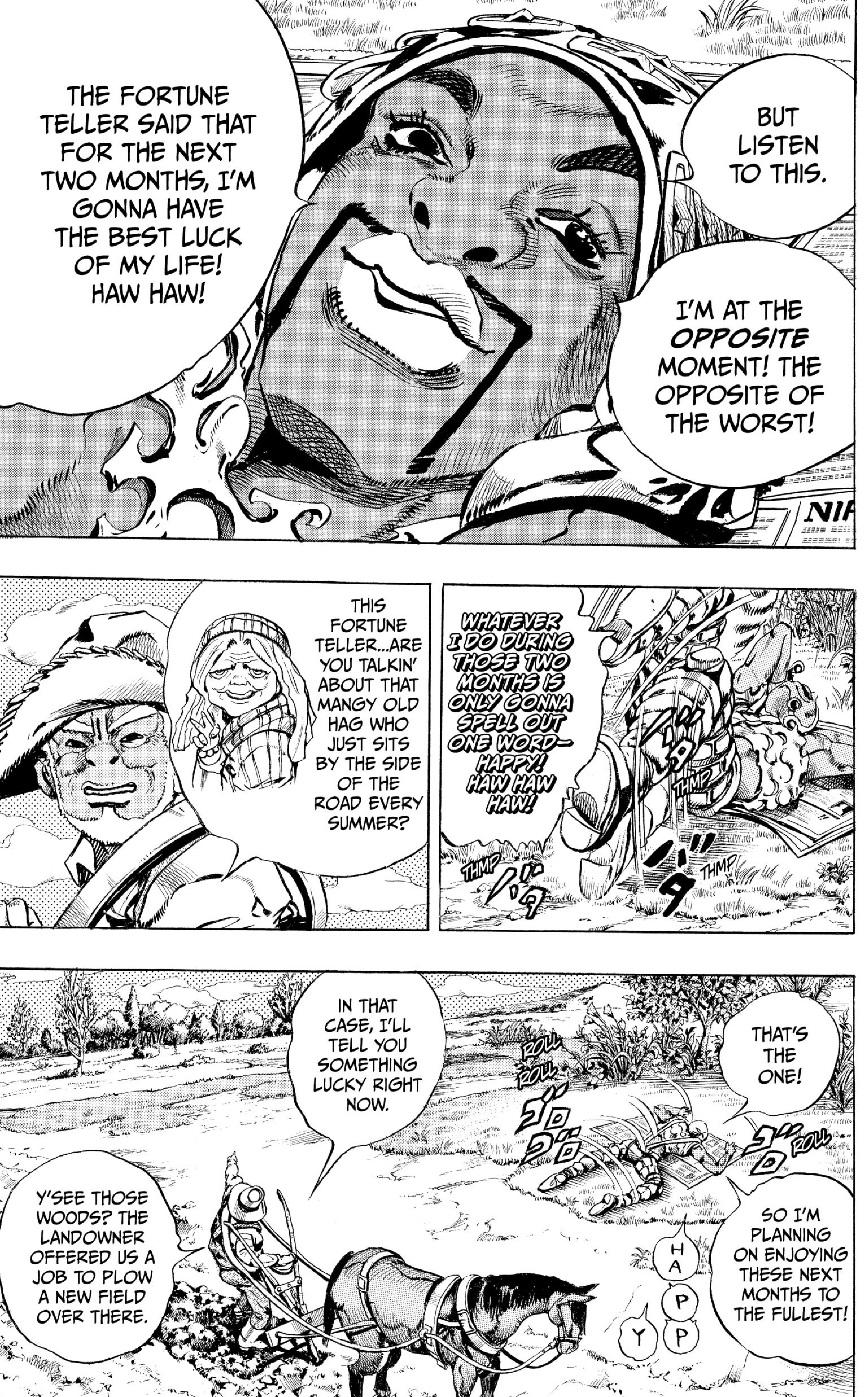
Both the Japanese and English-language versions include monetary amounts in dollars—but with values expressed as what they would have been worth during this manga's original publication in 2004. In 1890, workers earned around one dollar for a day's work, but with an amount like $10,000, for example, it could be hard to understand if that was a lot or a little for the time. Therefore, the $50,000,000 grand prize is worth approximately the same as it would be in the modern age.

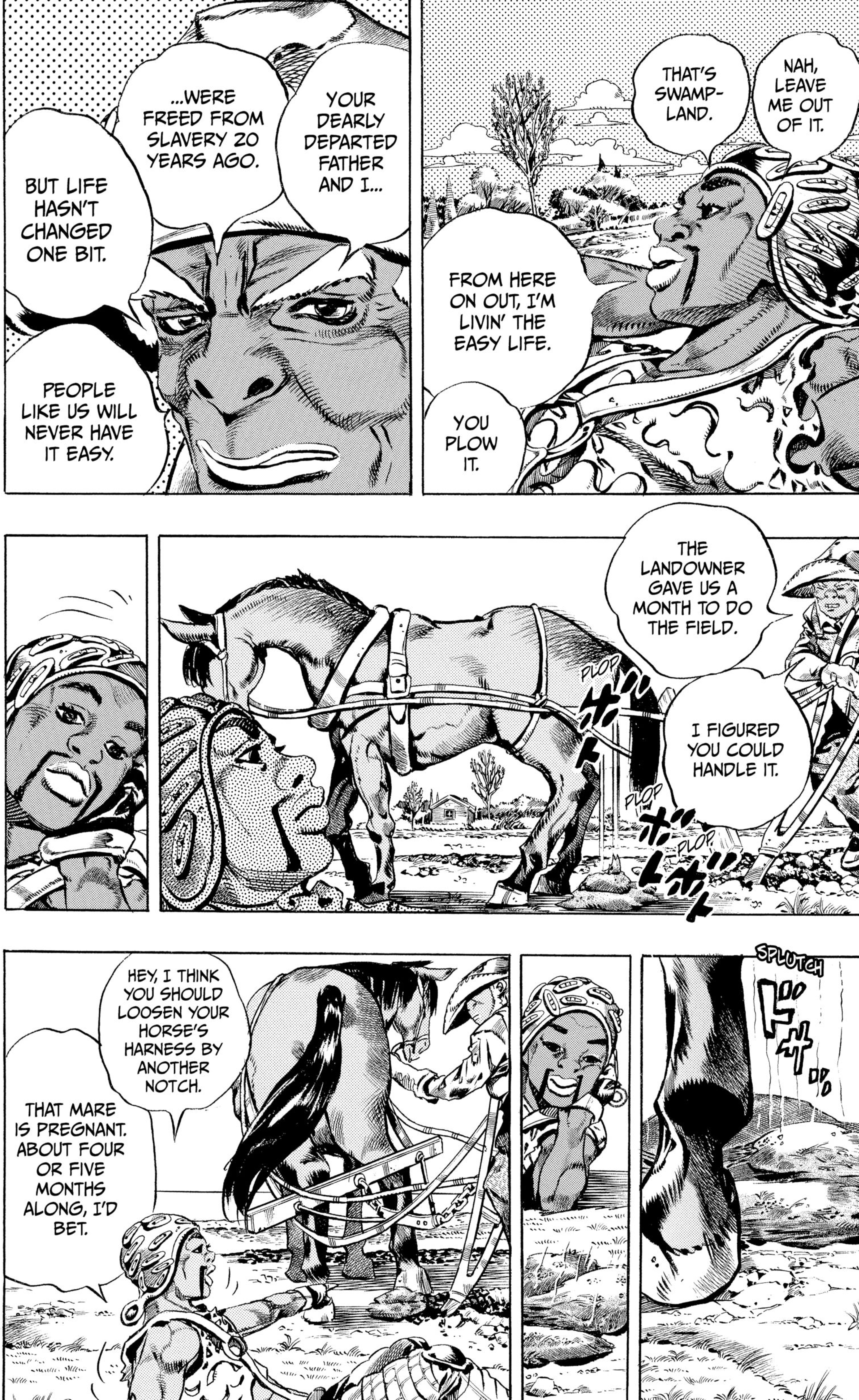
CHAPTER 2: Gyro Zeppeli

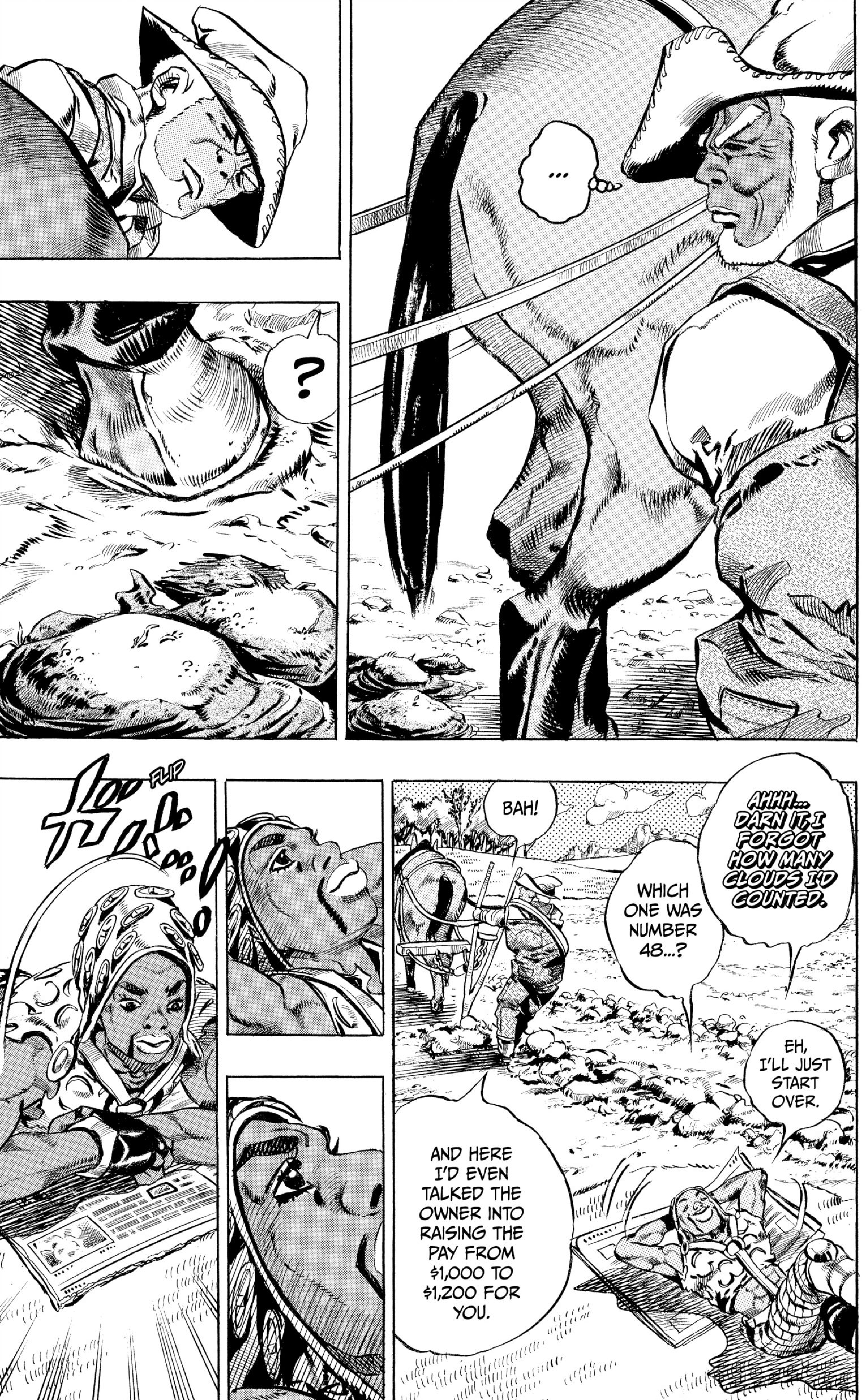

CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
WHATCHA DOIN' THERE, POCOLOCO?
JUST COUNTIN'.
COUNTIN' CLOUDS.

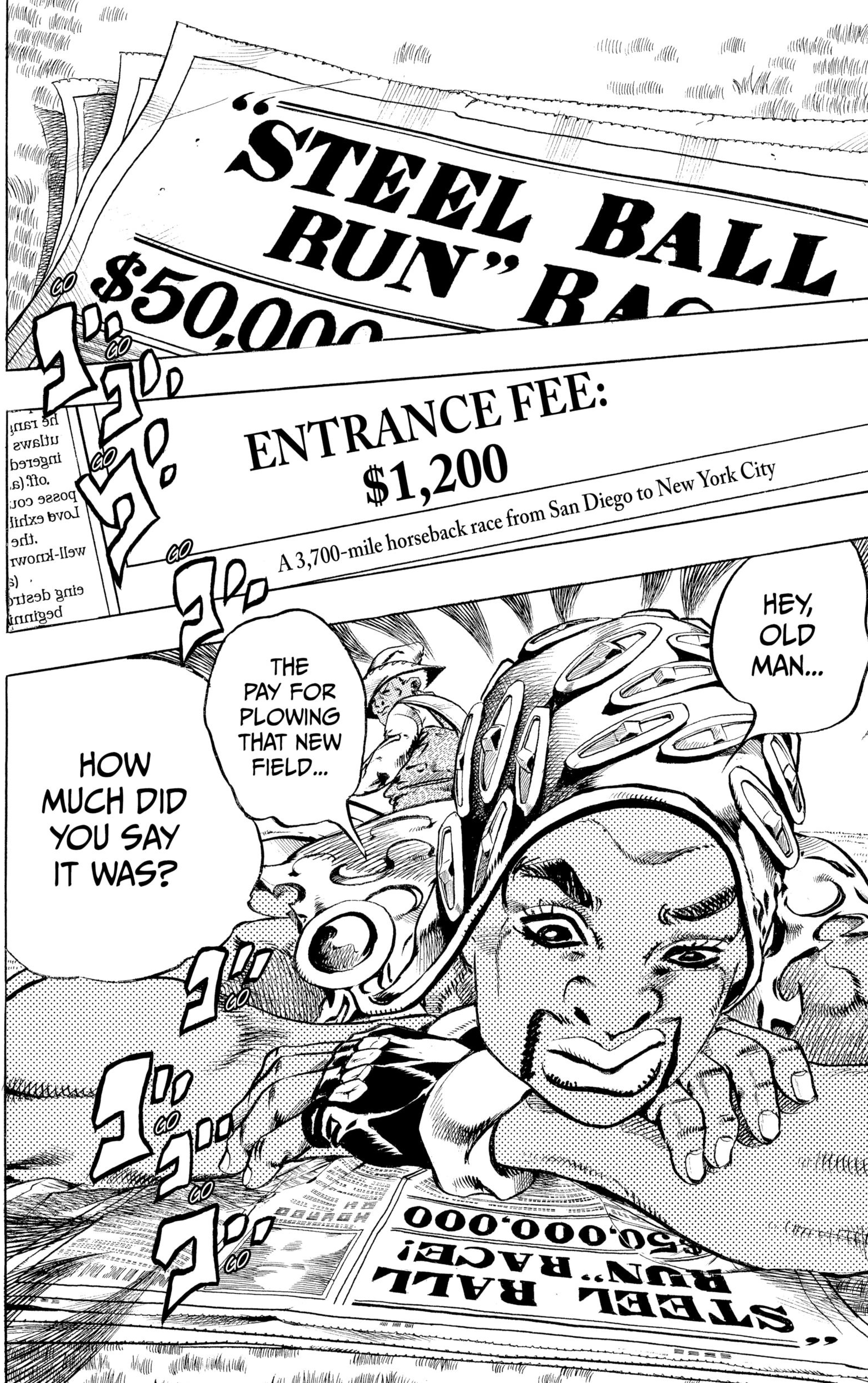
CHAPTER 2: Gyro Zeppeli

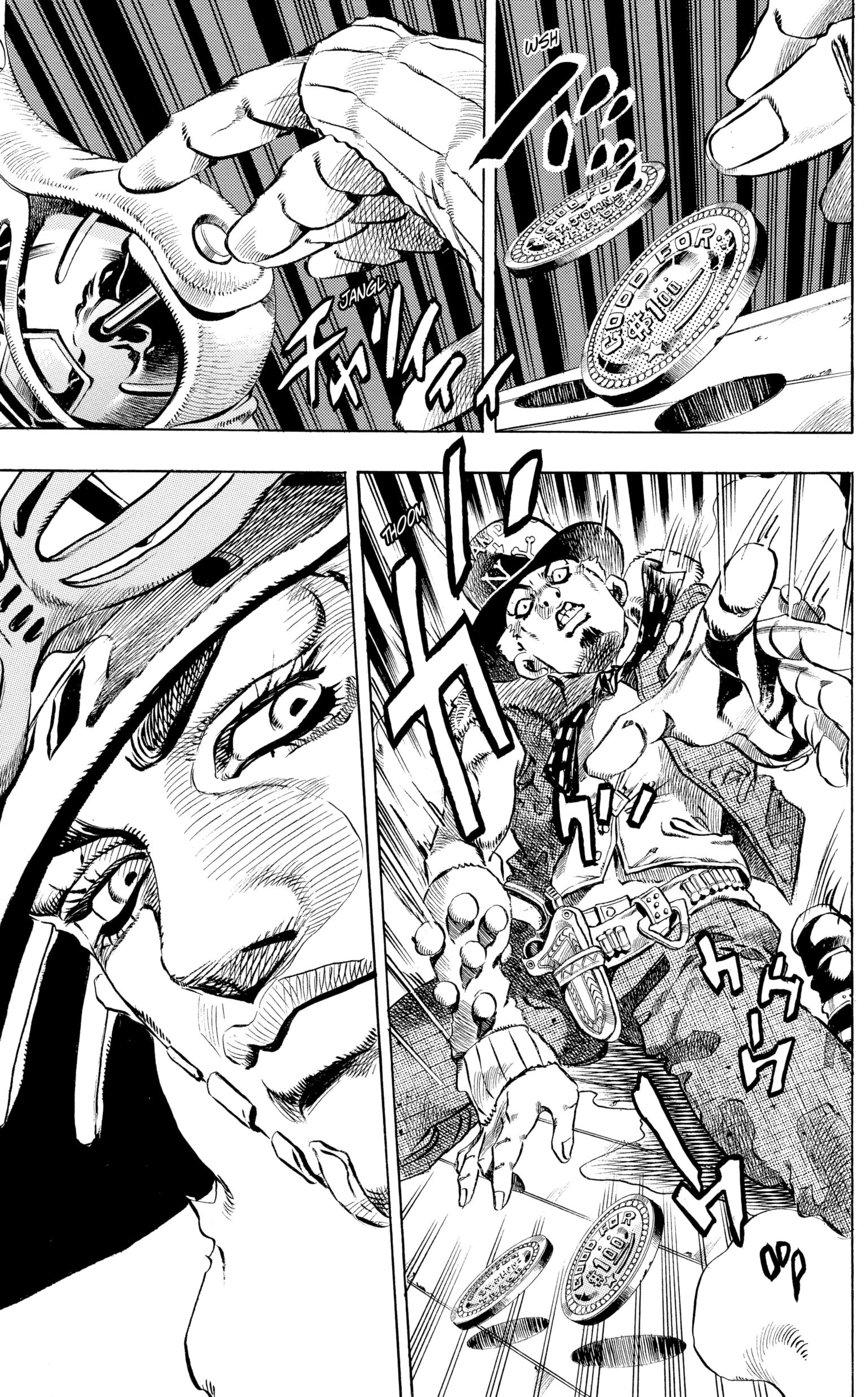

FIGURED I'D FINALLY GIVE IT A TRY, Y'KNOW?
I WANNA SEE HOW MANY I CAN COUNT IN A DAY.
WHAT I'M ASKING IS...
...WHY ARE YOU LYIN' ON YOUR ASS INSTEAD OF DOING ANY WORK?!
YOU EVER HEARD OF *AN INAUSPICIOUS MOMENT*, OLD MAN?
...
I'LL SAY IT AGAIN. *INAUSPICIOUS.*
I WENT INTO TOWN, MUST'VE BEEN ABOUT...
OH, THREE DAYS AGO NOW.
LOST SOME MONEY GAMBLING, SO I WENT TO GET MY FORTUNE TOLD BY THIS ROMANI WOMAN.
COURSE, SHOULD'VE DONE THAT BEFORE I WENT GAMBLIN'.
APPARENTLY, THE ABSOLUTE LOWEST OF LOW TIMES IN A PERSON'S LIFE IS THEIR MOST *INAUSPICIOUS MOMENT.*

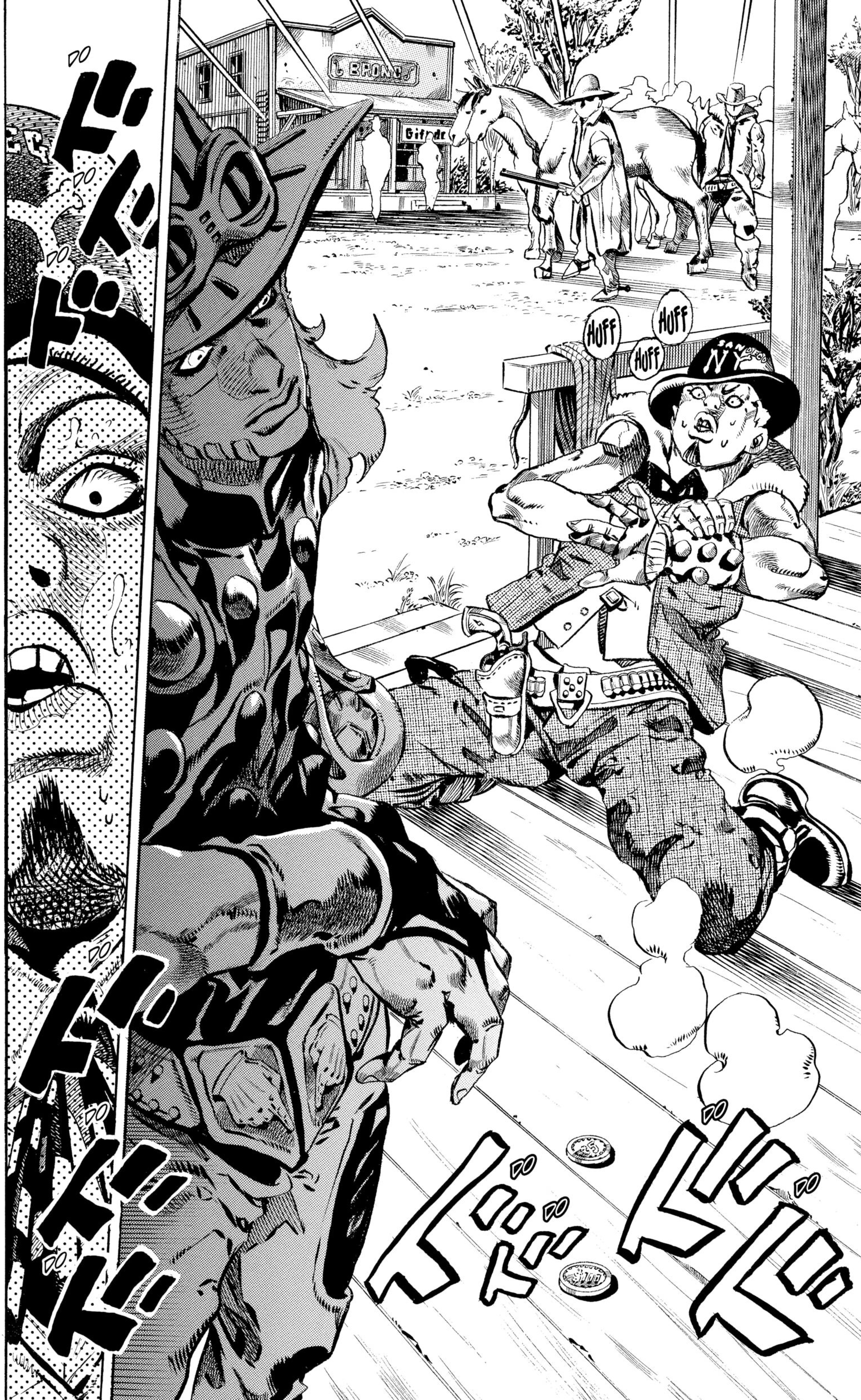

BUT LISTEN TO THIS.
I'M AT THE *OPPOSITE* MOMENT! THE OPPOSITE OF THE WORST!
THE FORTUNE TELLER SAID THAT FOR THE NEXT TWO MONTHS, I'M GONNA HAVE THE BEST LUCK OF MY LIFE! HAW HAW!
WHATEVER I DO DURING THOSE TWO MONTHS IS ONLY GONNA SPELL OUT ONE WORD— HAPPY! HAW HAW HAW!
THMP
バタ
THMP
バタ
THMP
THIS FORTUNE TELLER...ARE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT THAT MANGY OLD HAG WHO JUST SITS BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD EVERY SUMMER?
THAT'S THE ONE!
ROLL
ゴロ
SO I'M PLANNING ON ENJOYING THESE NEXT MONTHS TO THE FULLEST!
HAPPY
ROLL ROLL
ゴロゴロ
IN THAT CASE, I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING LUCKY RIGHT NOW.
Y'SEE THOSE WOODS? THE LANDOWNER OFFERED US A JOB TO PLOW A NEW FIELD OVER THERE.

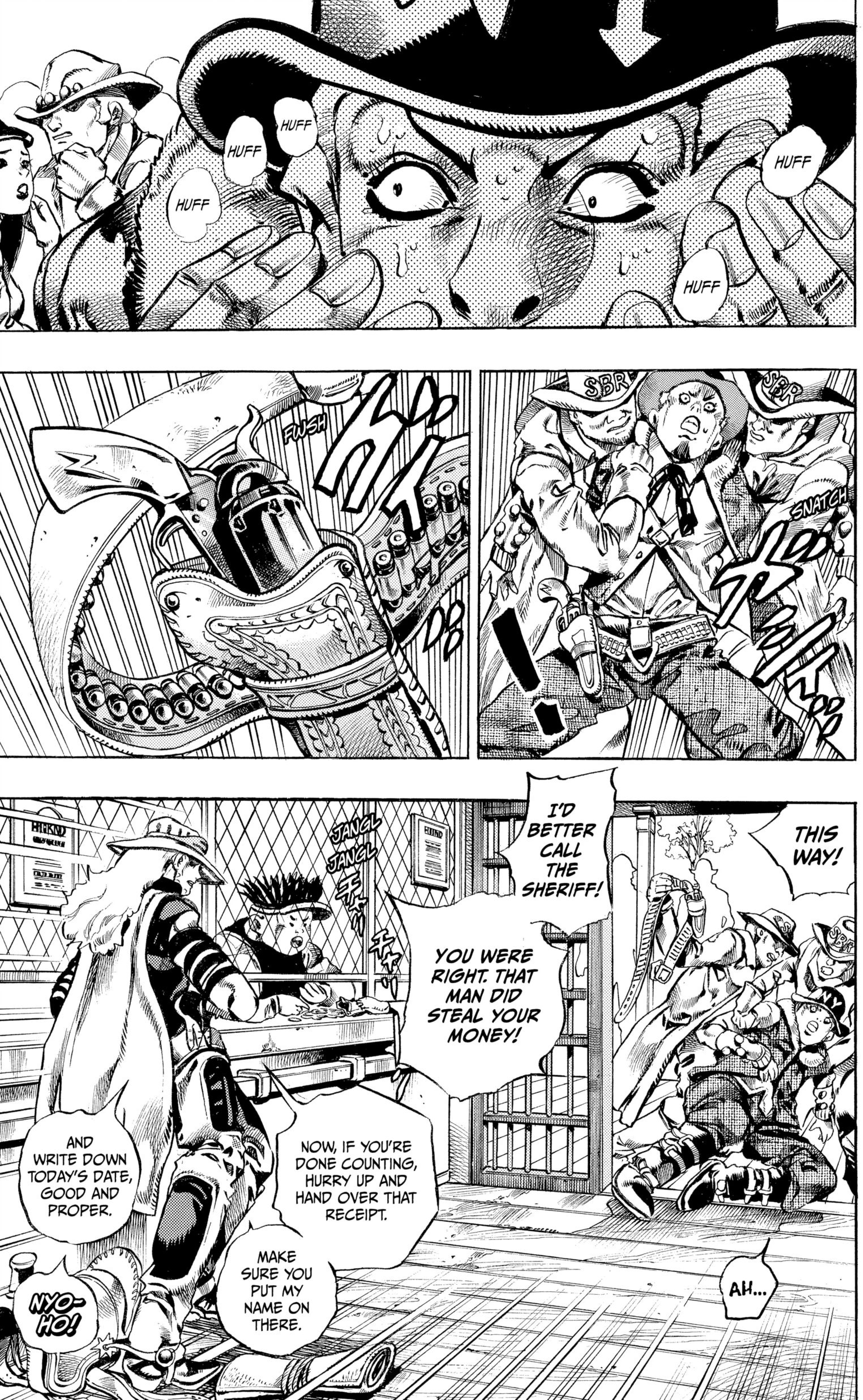

NAH, LEAVE ME OUT OF IT.
THAT'S SWAMPLAND.
FROM HERE ON OUT, I'M LIVIN' THE EASY LIFE.
YOU PLOW IT.
YOUR DEARLY DEPARTED FATHER AND I...
...WERE FREED FROM SLAVERY 20 YEARS AGO.
BUT LIFE HASN'T CHANGED ONE BIT.
PEOPLE LIKE US WILL NEVER HAVE IT EASY.
THE LANDOWNER GAVE US A MONTH TO DO THE FIELD.
I FIGURED YOU COULD HANDLE IT.
PLOP ボトッ
PLOP ボト
PLOP ボトッ
SPLUTCH ドサ
HEY, I THINK YOU SHOULD LOOSEN YOUR HORSE'S HARNESS BY ANOTHER NOTCH.
THAT MARE IS PREGNANT. ABOUT FOUR OR FIVE MONTHS ALONG, I'D BET.


...
?
AHHH... DARN IT, I FORGOT HOW MANY CLOUDS I'D COUNTED.
BAH!
WHICH ONE WAS NUMBER 48...?
EH, I'LL JUST START OVER.
AND HERE I'D EVEN TALKED THE OWNER INTO RAISING THE PAY FROM $1,000 TO $1,200 FOR YOU.
FLIP

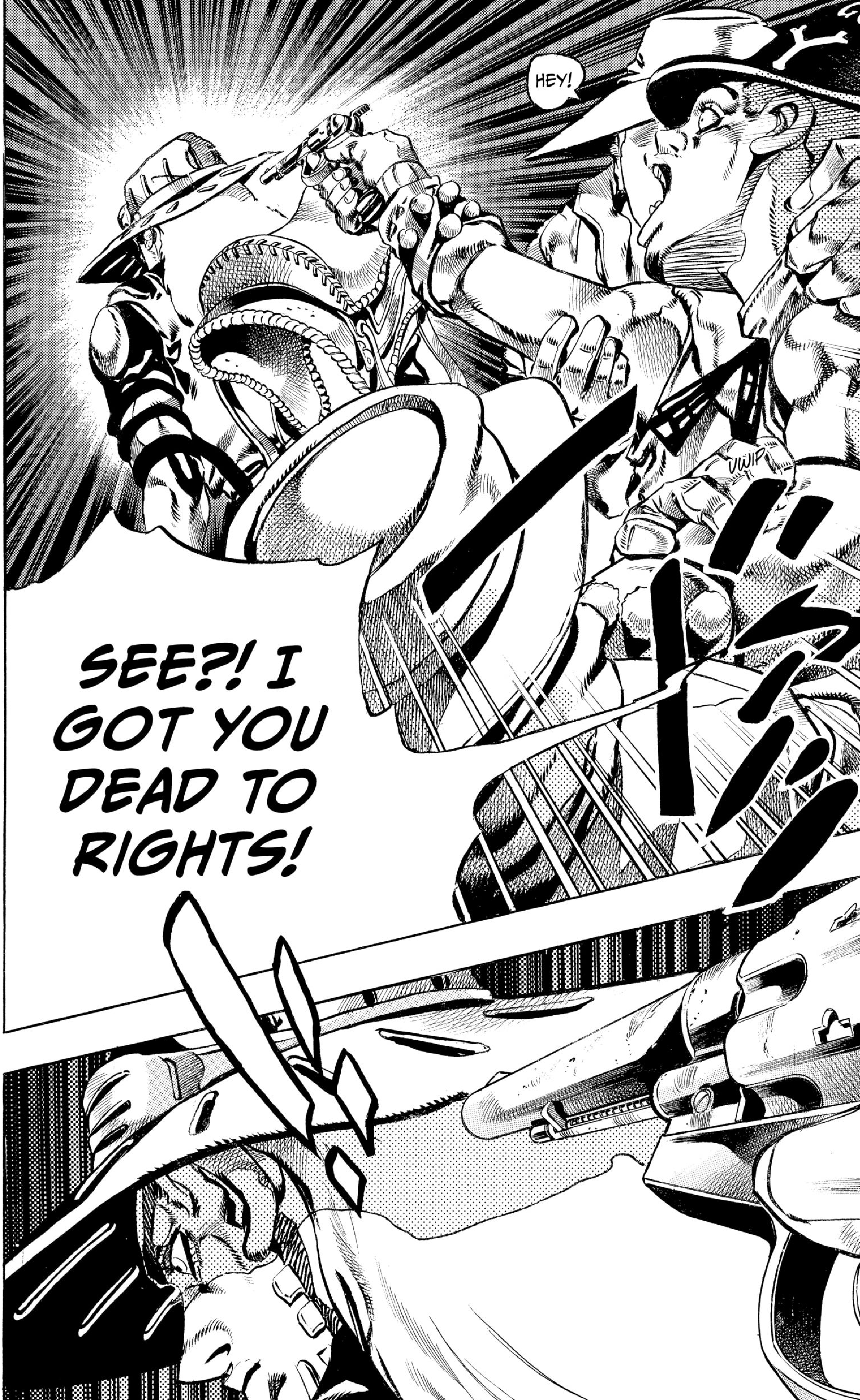

"STEEL BALL RUN" RA
$50,000
ENTRANCE FEE: $1,200
A 3,700-mile horseback race from San Diego to New York City
GO GO GO
HEY, OLD MAN...
THE PAY FOR PLOWING THAT NEW FIELD...
HOW MUCH DID YOU SAY IT WAS?
"STEEL BALL RUN" RACE!
$50,000,000

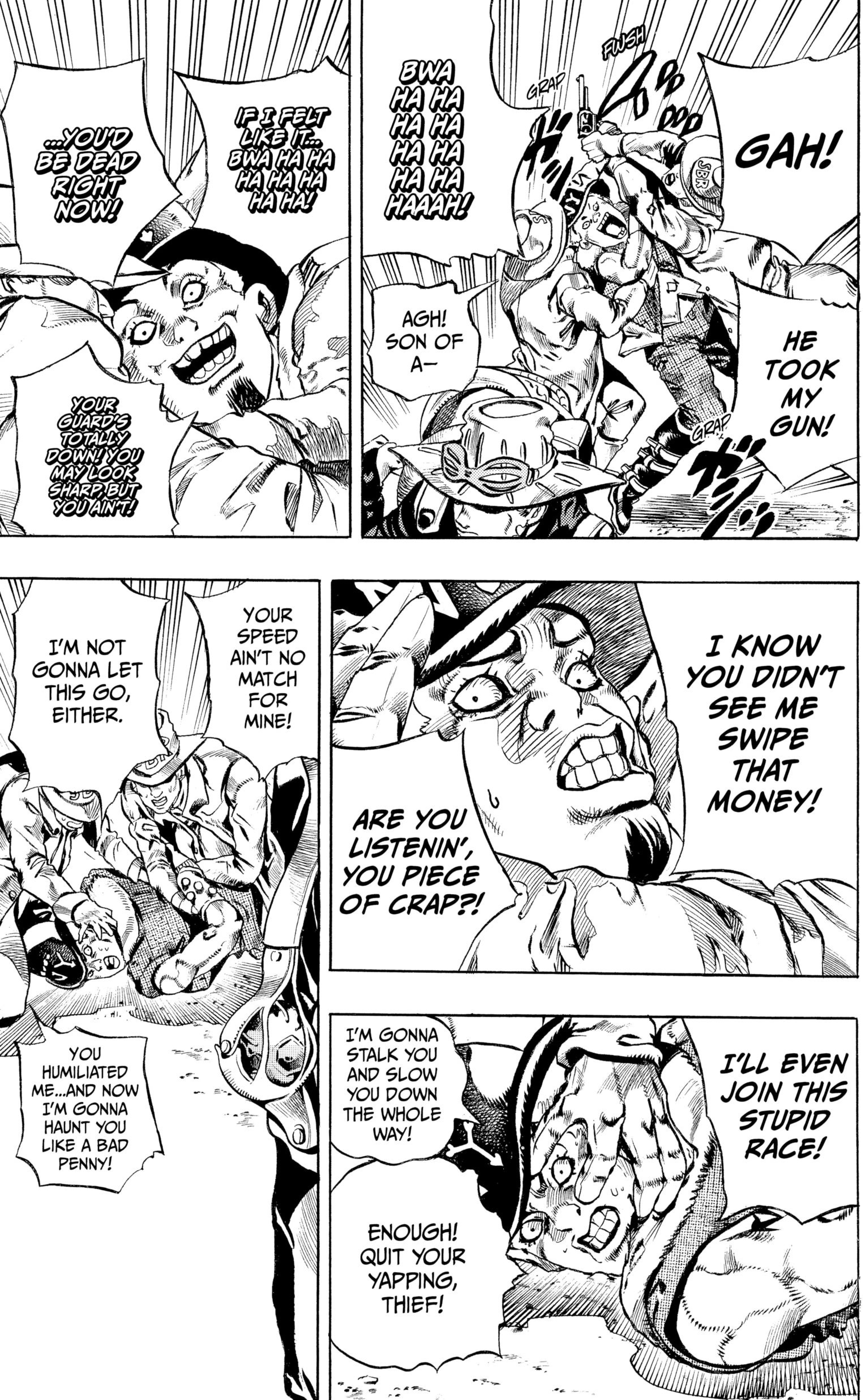

WSH
GOOD FOR ST. JOHN TRADE
GOOD FOR $100
JANGL
チャリィィィ
THOOM
GOOD FOR $100
ST. JOHN TRADE
ODP

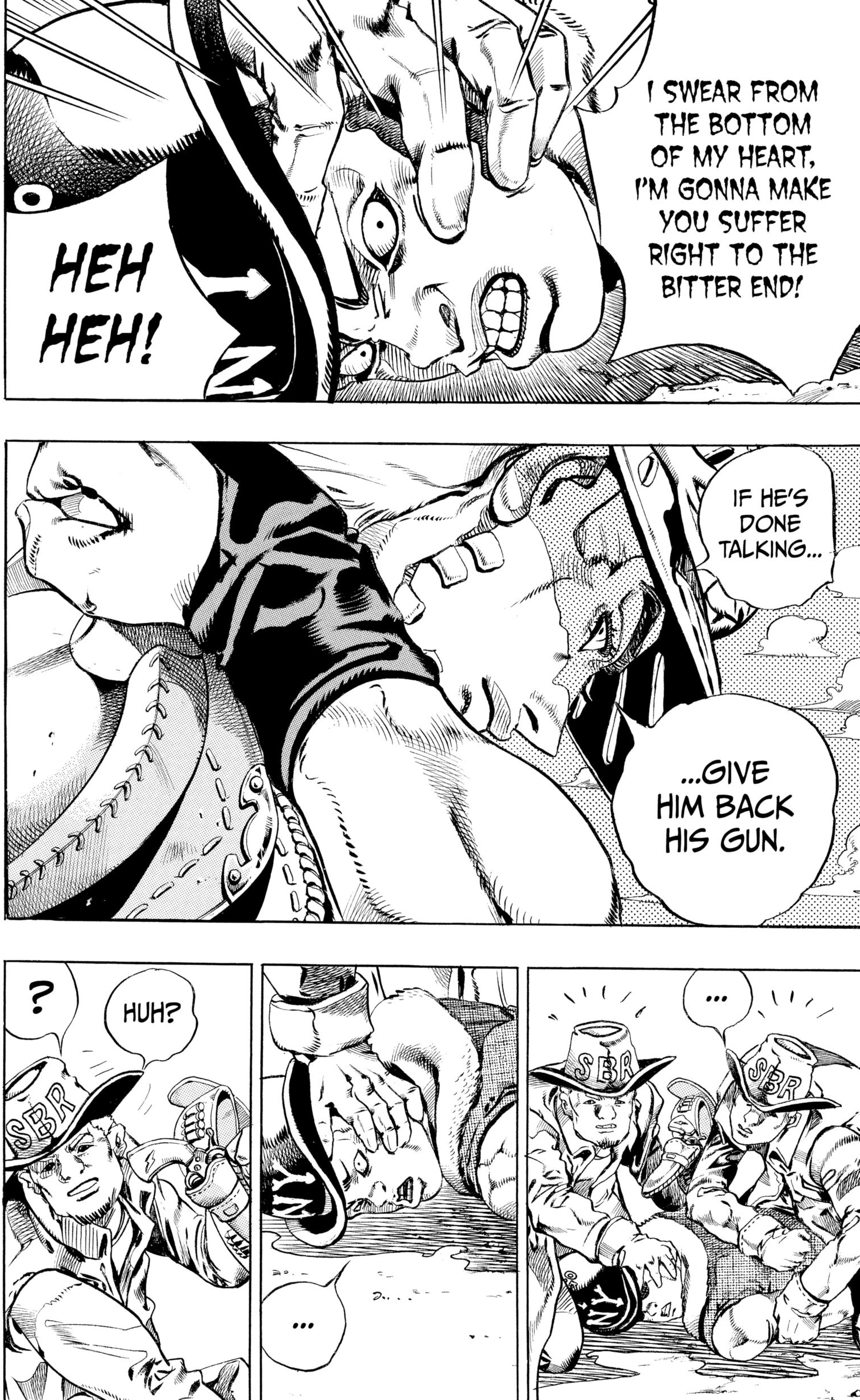

BRONCS
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
ドドドド
DO DO DO DO
ドドドド
DO DO DO
ドドドド
DO DO DO DO

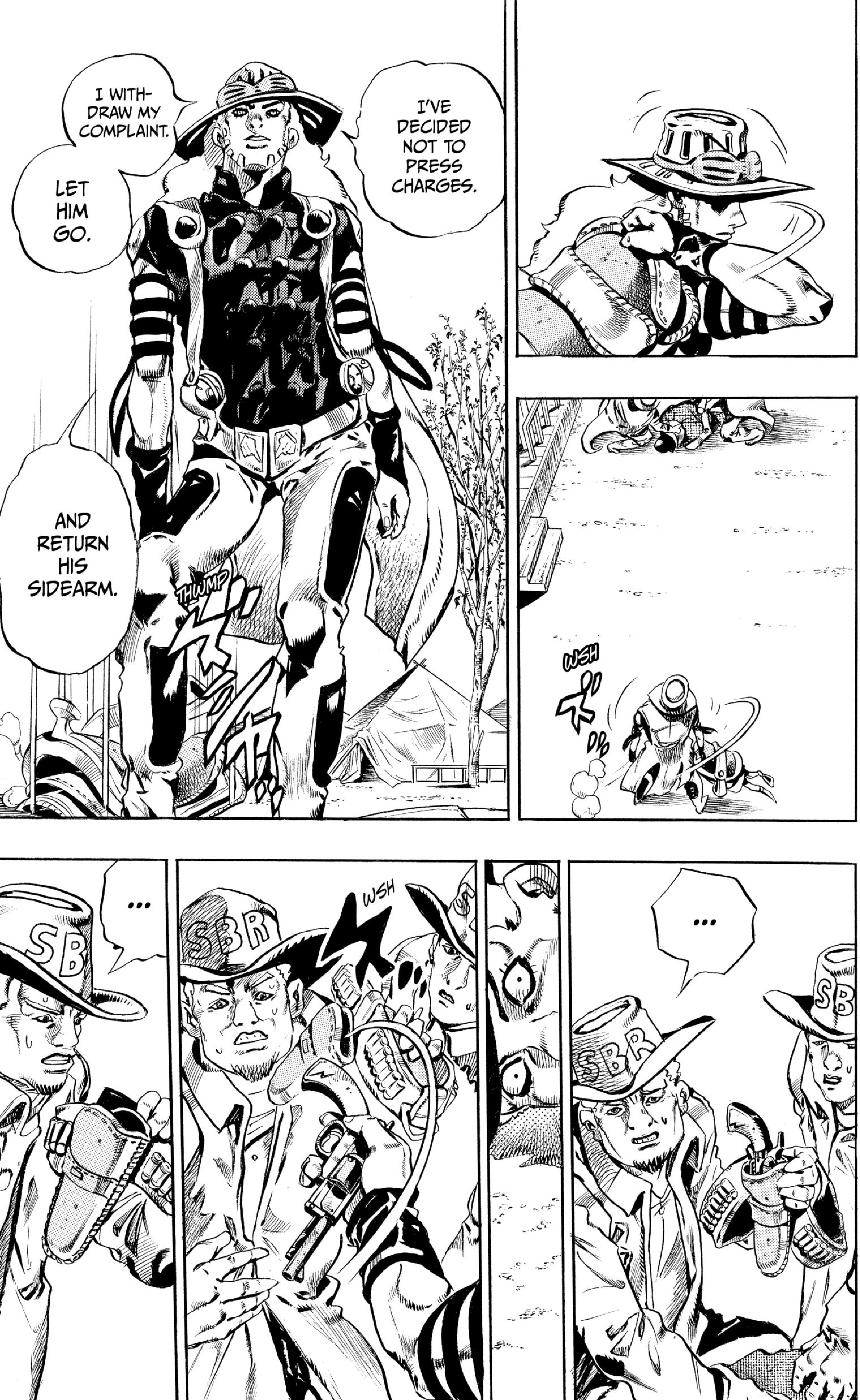

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
SNATCH
FWSH
THIS WAY!
I'D BETTER CALL THE SHERIFF!
YOU WERE RIGHT. THAT MAN DID STEAL YOUR MONEY!
JANGL JANGL
NOW, IF YOU'RE DONE COUNTING, HURRY UP AND HAND OVER THAT RECEIPT.
AND WRITE DOWN TODAY'S DATE, GOOD AND PROPER.
MAKE SURE YOU PUT MY NAME ON THERE.
AH...
NYO-HO!

ヅ
バァァァ
SHAAAAA
THE RACE STARTS IN TWO DAYS, HUH? WONDER WHICH TENT THEY'RE PUTTING ME IN UNTIL THEN...
THIS ISN'T OVER, YOU SON OF A BITCH!
LOOK AT ME WHEN I'M TALKIN' TO YOU! YOU'RE ACTIN' LIKE YOU'RE SOME BIG MAN?! ALL FOR A LOUSY 20 BUCKS?!
ARE THOSE SOME KINDA WEAPON?
YOU THINK YOU CAN WIN A FIGHT WITH THOSE GRIMY THINGS AROUND YOUR WAIST, YOU BASTARD?!
WELL?! GO ON THEN, TRY AND TAKE ME!
WHY DON'T YA JUST GO ON AND SHOOT ME, HUH? SHOULD BE EASY, YEAH?
HEY! QUIT CAUSIN' TROUBLE! JUST SHUT UP AND WAIT FOR THE SHERIFF!

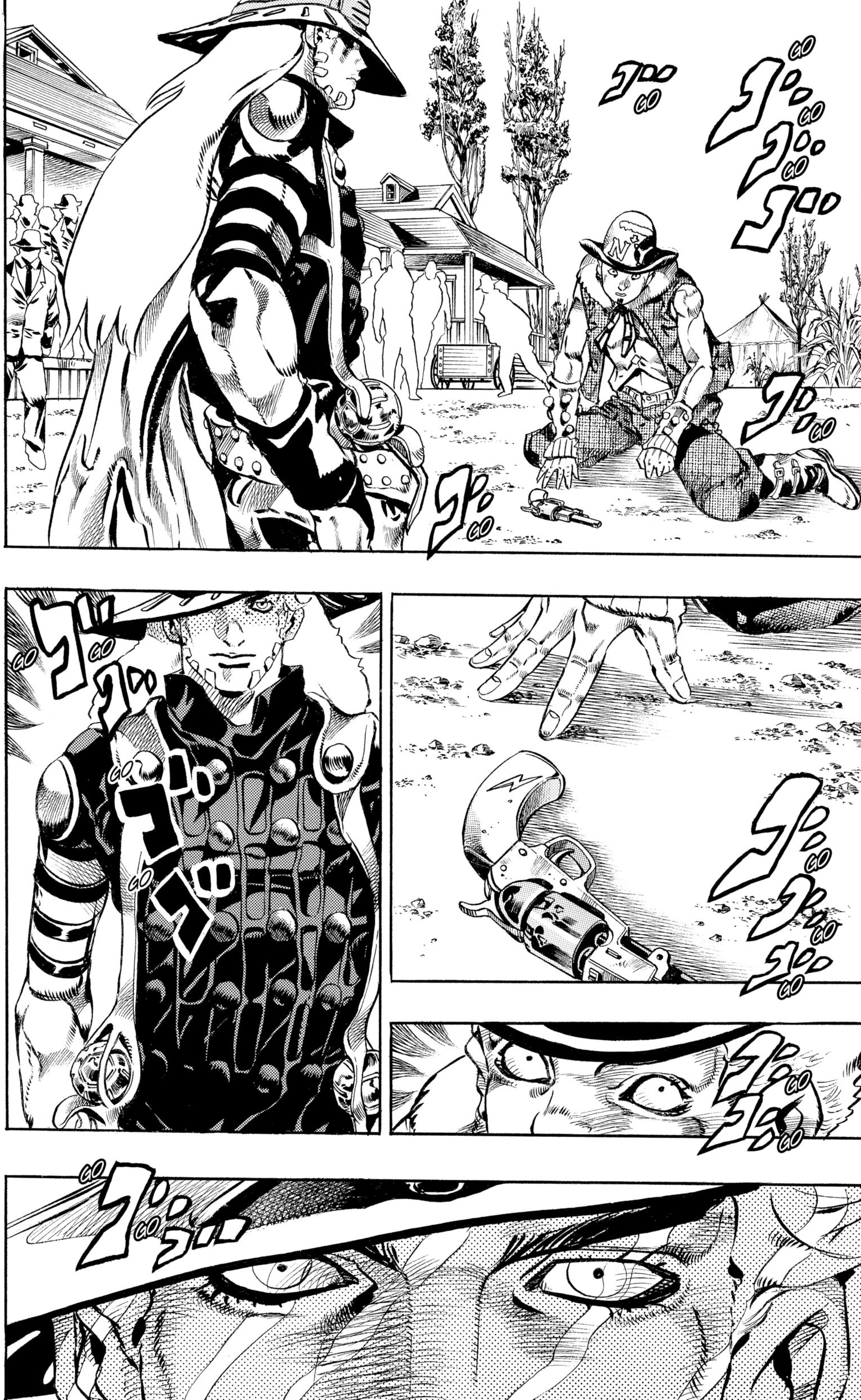

HEY!
VWIP
SEE?! I GOT YOU DEAD TO RIGHTS!

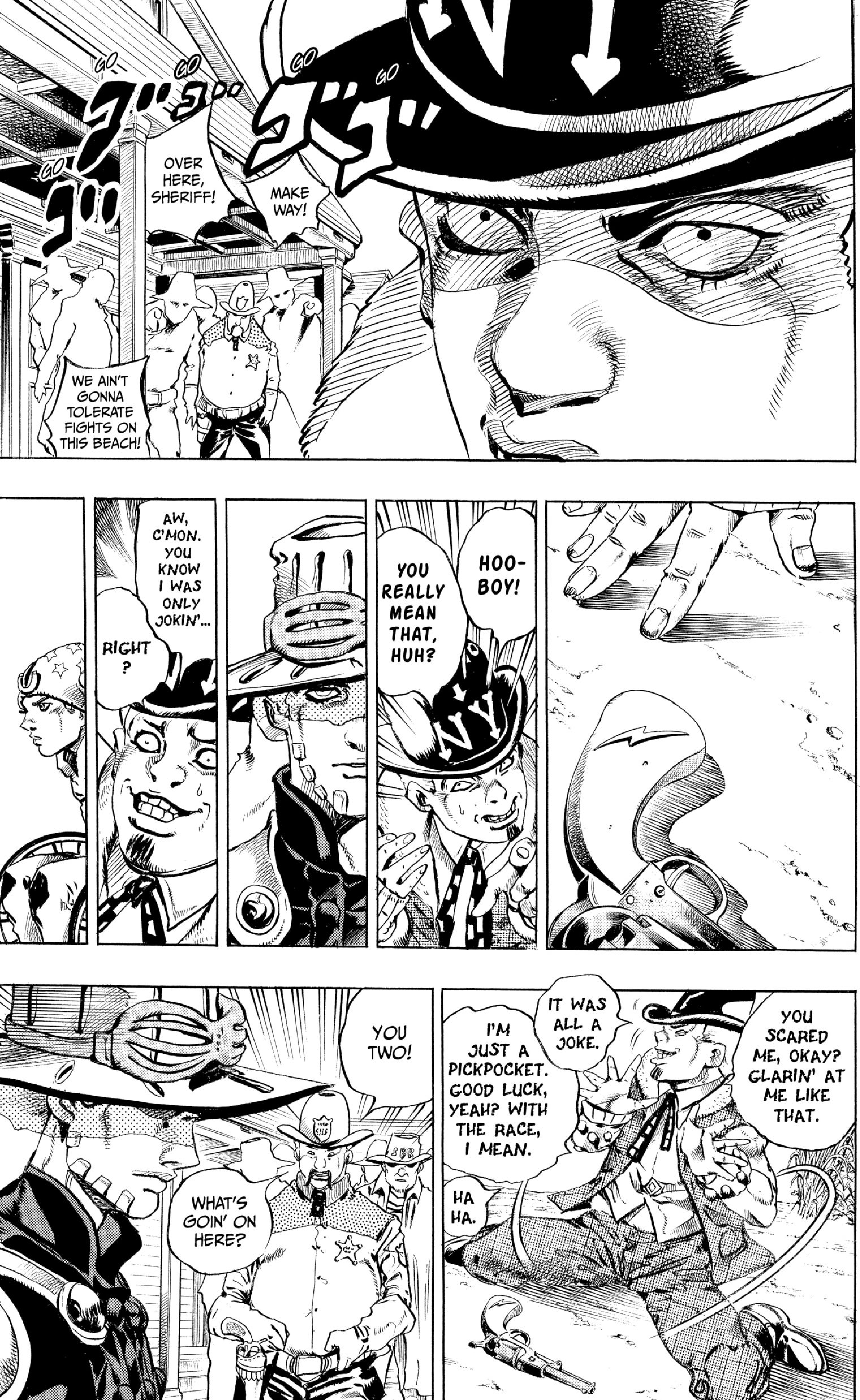

YOUR GUARD'S TOTALLY DOWN! YOU MAY LOOK SHARP BUT YOU AIN'T!
IF I FELT LIKE IT... BWA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!
...YOU'D BE DEAD RIGHT NOW!
BWA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HAAAH!
FWSH
GRAP
GAH!
SBR
AGH! SON OF A—
HE TOOK MY GUN!
GRAP
I'M NOT GONNA LET THIS GO, EITHER.
YOUR SPEED AIN'T NO MATCH FOR MINE!
YOU HUMILIATED ME...AND NOW I'M GONNA HAUNT YOU LIKE A BAD PENNY!
I KNOW YOU DIDN'T SEE ME SWIPE THAT MONEY!
ARE YOU LISTENIN', YOU PIECE OF CRAP?!
I'LL EVEN JOIN THIS STUPID RACE!
I'M GONNA STALK YOU AND SLOW YOU DOWN THE WHOLE WAY!
ENOUGH! QUIT YOUR YAPPING, THIEF!


I SWEAR FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART, I'M GONNA MAKE YOU SUFFER RIGHT TO THE BITTER END!
HEH HEH!
IF HE'S DONE TALKING...
...GIVE HIM BACK HIS GUN.
...
...
っ...
HUH?
?

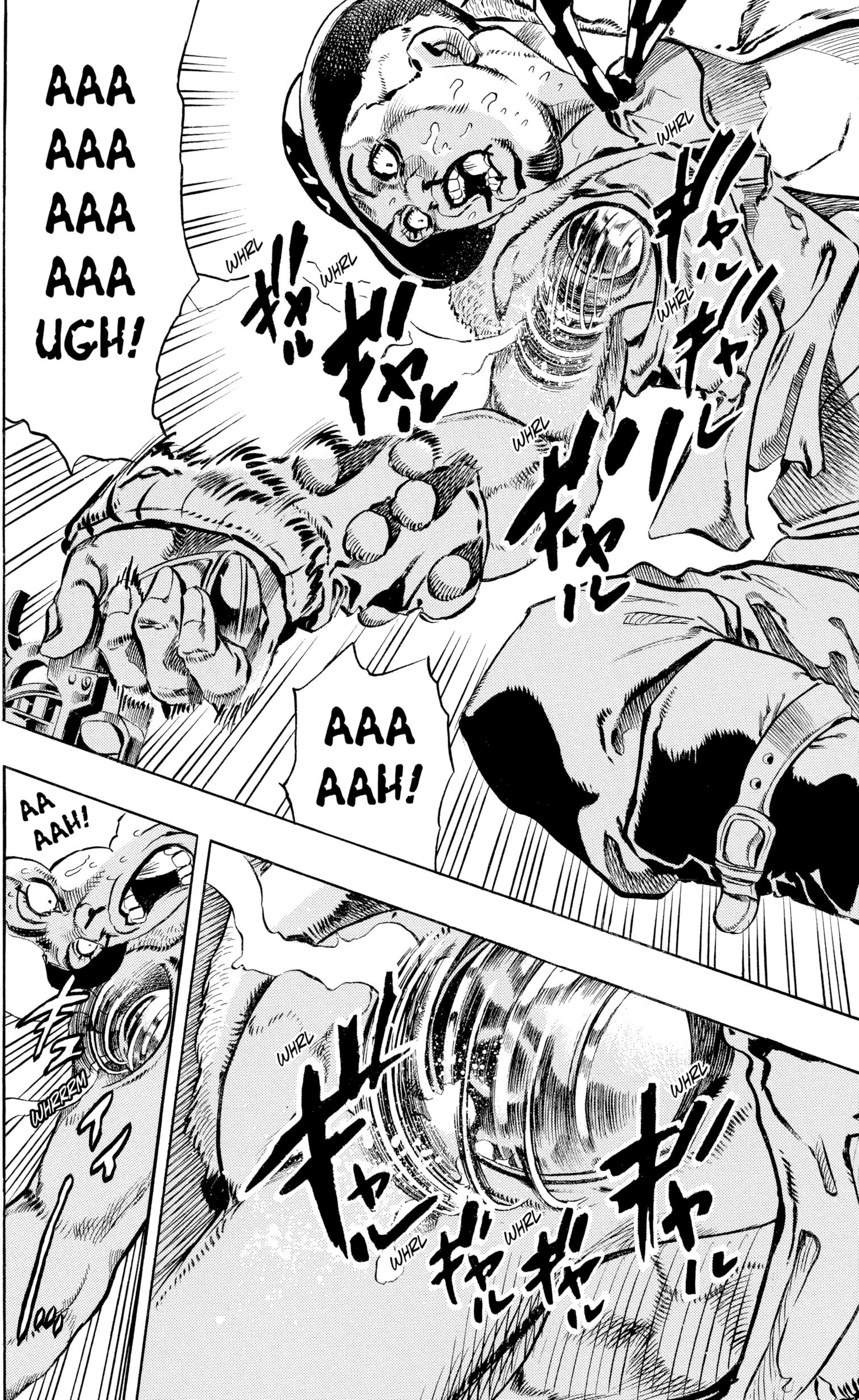

WSH
I'VE DECIDED NOT TO PRESS CHARGES.
I WITHDRAW MY COMPLAINT.
LET HIM GO.
AND RETURN HIS SIDEARM.
THWMP
...
WSH
...

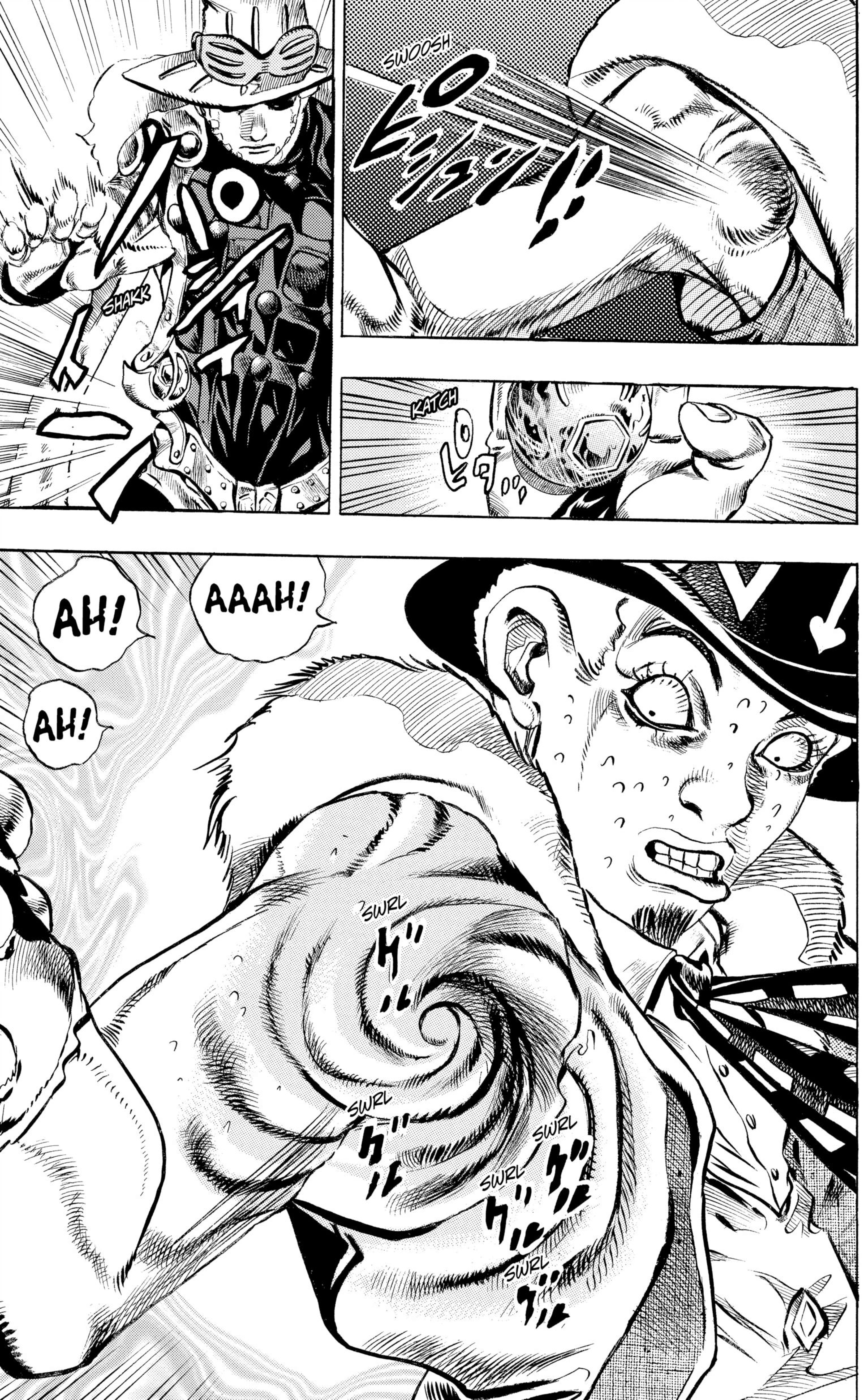
!
KA-THNK
!!
...
!!
PICK IT UP.
SNAP
JUST KNOW...
IF YOU DO, I'LL TAKE THAT AS A SIGN...
GO
GO
GO
...THAT YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT GETTING IN MY WAY.
GO
GO
GO
GO
GO
GO
GO
GO
WHRL
HEY, WHAT'S GOING ON? WHAT'S EVERYBODY RUNNING AROUND FOR?
CRAP! THIS IS GETTING BAD!
LET ME THROUGH! WHY ISN'T THE SHERIFF HERE YET? GO GET HIM, FAST!
GUYS! WHAT IS IT? OUTTA THE WAY!
DAMN IT, DON'T STAND IN FRONT OF ME! I CAN'T SEE!
COME ON, JERKS! LET ME THROUGH! I CAN'T SEE A DAMN THING!

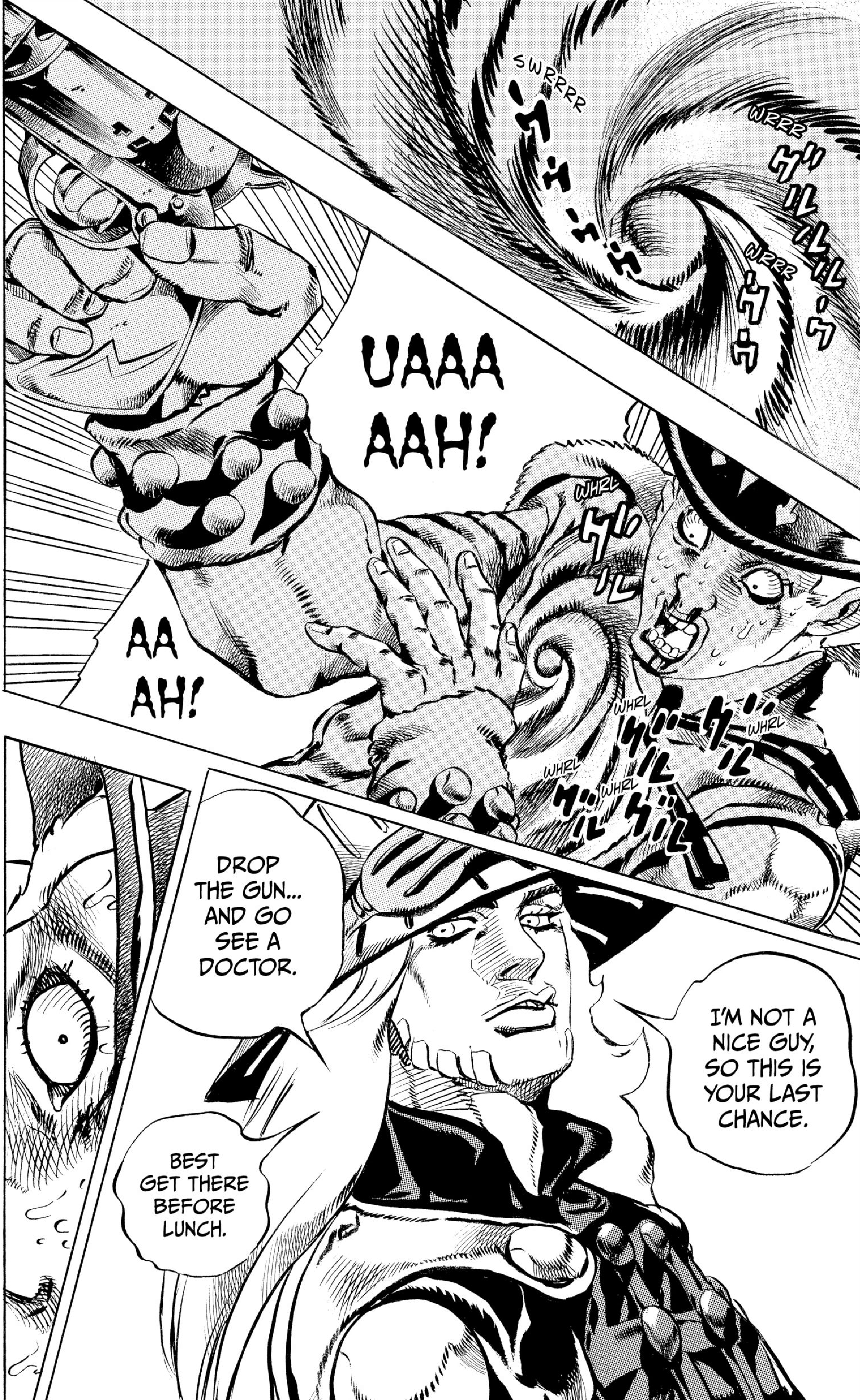

ゴゴゴゴ
GO GO GO GO
ゴゴ
GO
ゴゴ
GO
ゴゴゴゴ
GO GO GO
ゴゴゴ
GO GO
ゴゴゴ
GO GO
ゴゴゴゴ
GO GO GO GO
ゴゴゴ
GO GO

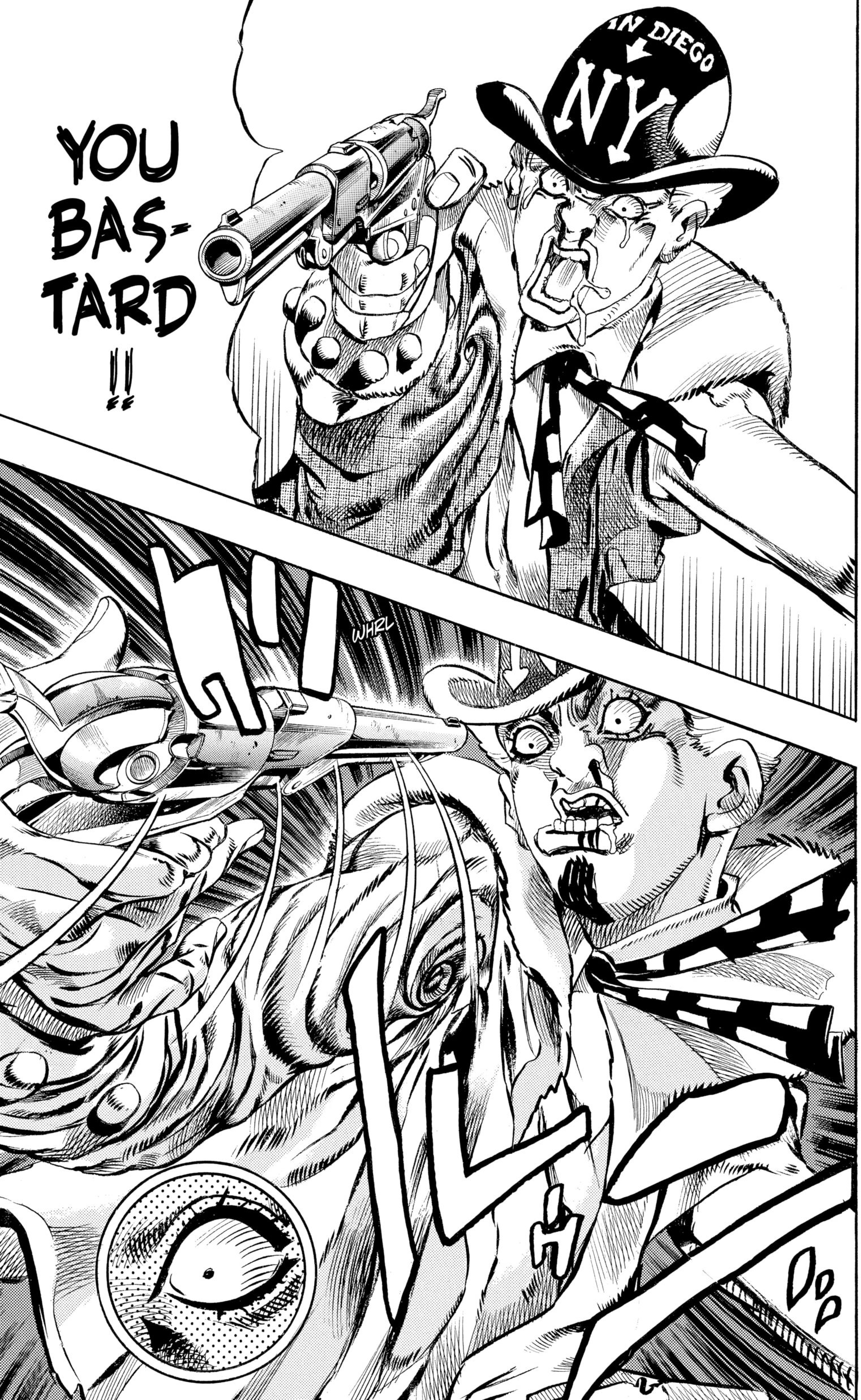

GO GO
ゴゴ
MAKE WAY!
GO GO GO
ゴゴゴ
OVER HERE, SHERIFF!
WE AIN'T GONNA TOLERATE FIGHTS ON THIS BEACH!
HOO-BOY!
YOU REALLY MEAN THAT, HUH?
AW, C'MON. YOU KNOW I WAS ONLY JOKIN'...
RIGHT?
YOU SCARED ME, OKAY? GLARIN' AT ME LIKE THAT.
IT WAS ALL A JOKE.
I'M JUST A PICKPOCKET. GOOD LUCK, YEAH? WITH THE RACE, I MEAN.
HA HA.
YOU TWO!
WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE?

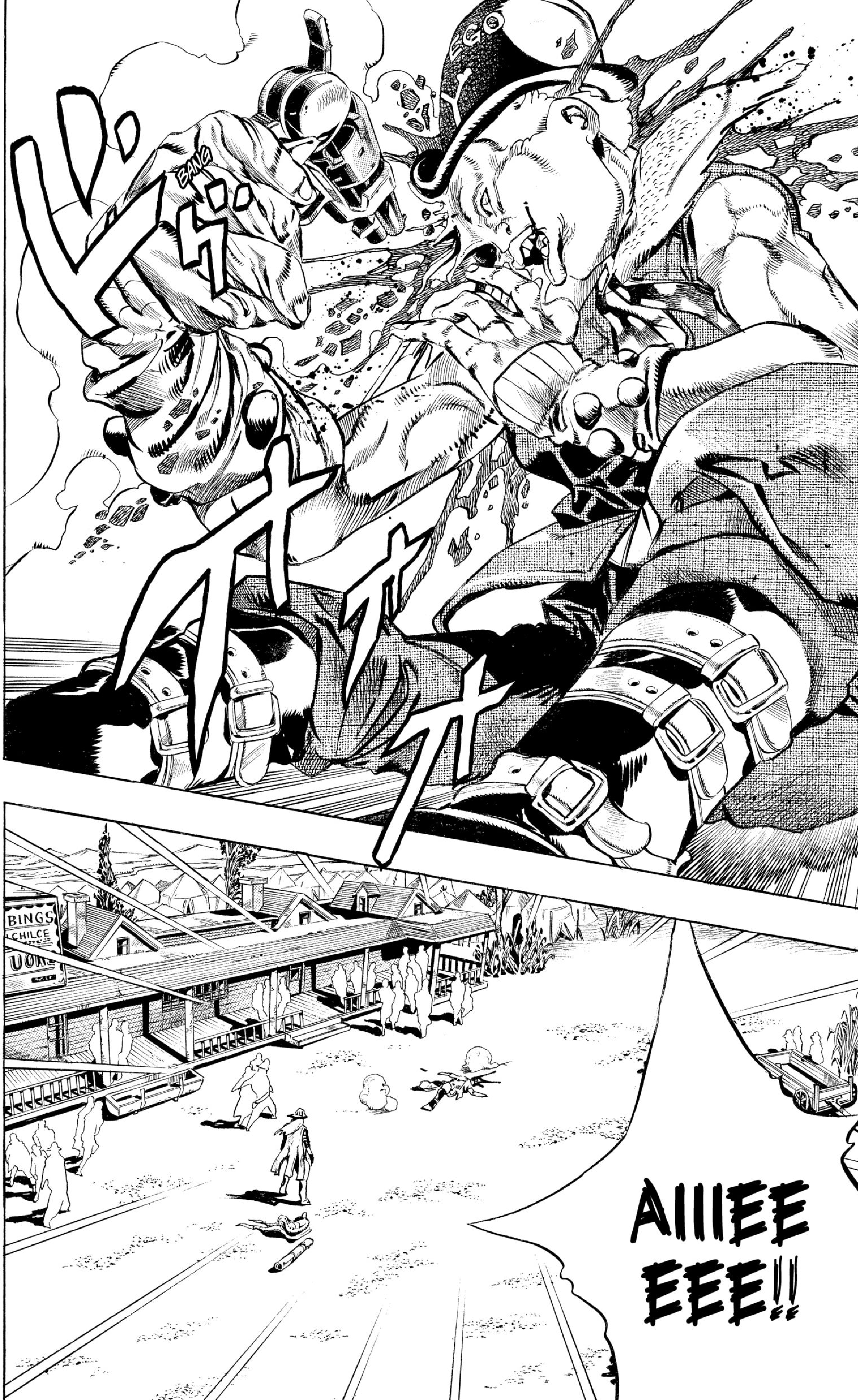
WHAAAM
URGH!
WHOA !!
!!
SBR
WOW!

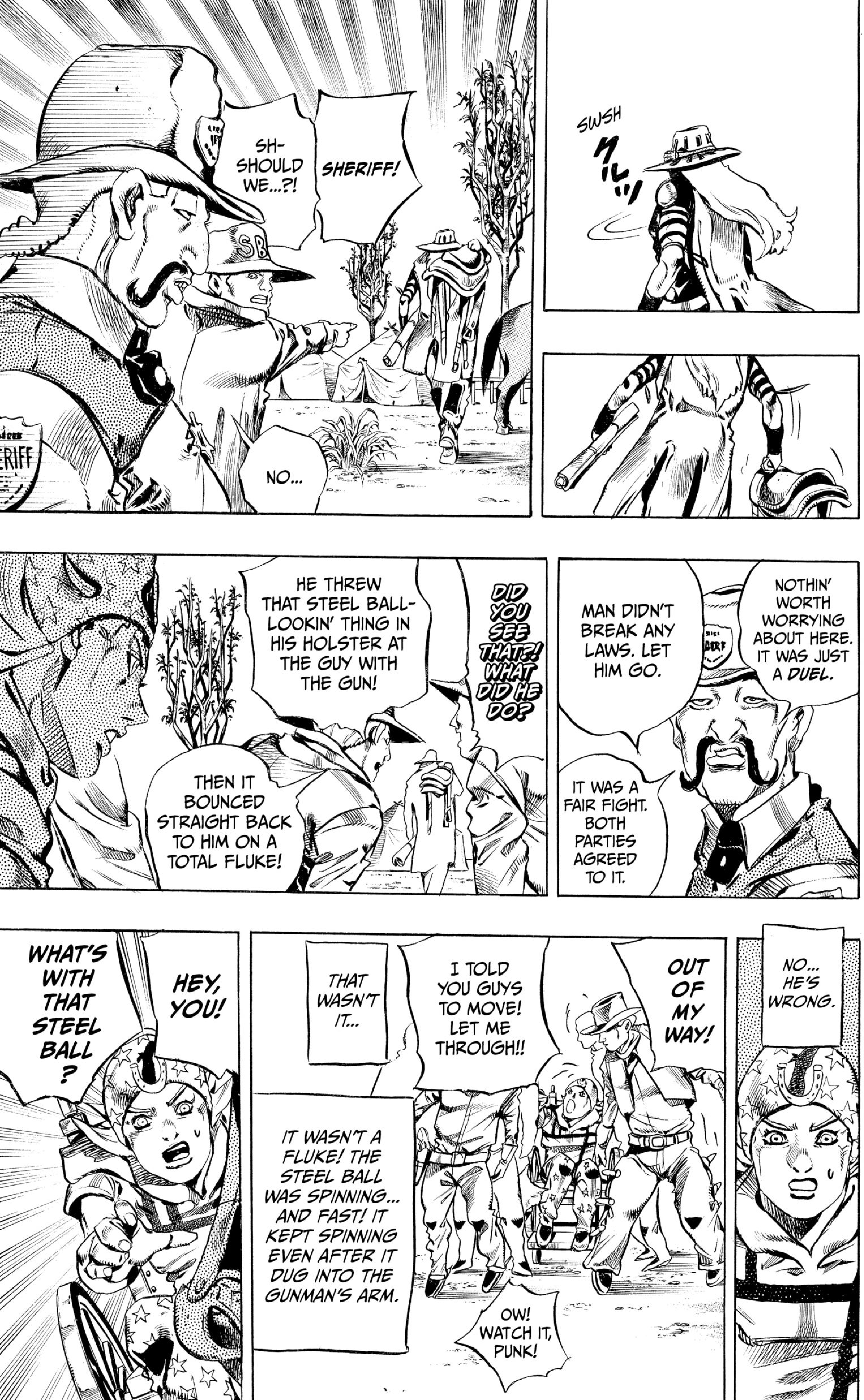

WHRL
ギャン
WHRL
WHRL
ギャン
AAA AAA AAA AAA UGH!
WHRL
WHRL
ギャ!!
ギャン
AAA AAH!
WHRL
WHRL
ギャン
WHRL
WHRL
ギャン
ギャン
WHRL
ギャン
AA AAH!
キュイーン
WHRRRM

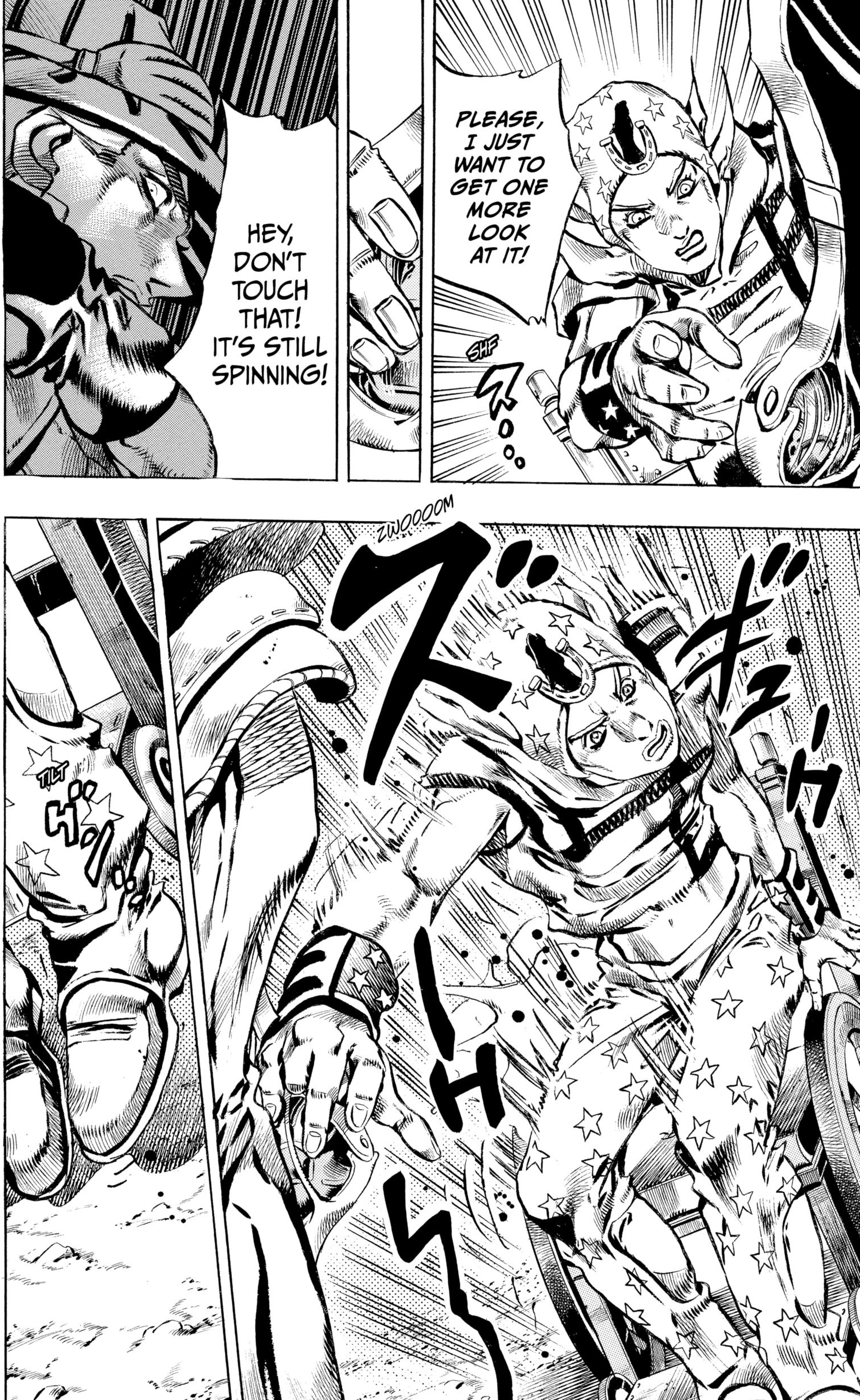

SWOOSH
KATCH
SHAKK
AAAH!
AH!
AH!
SWRL
SWRL
SWRL
SWRL
SWRL

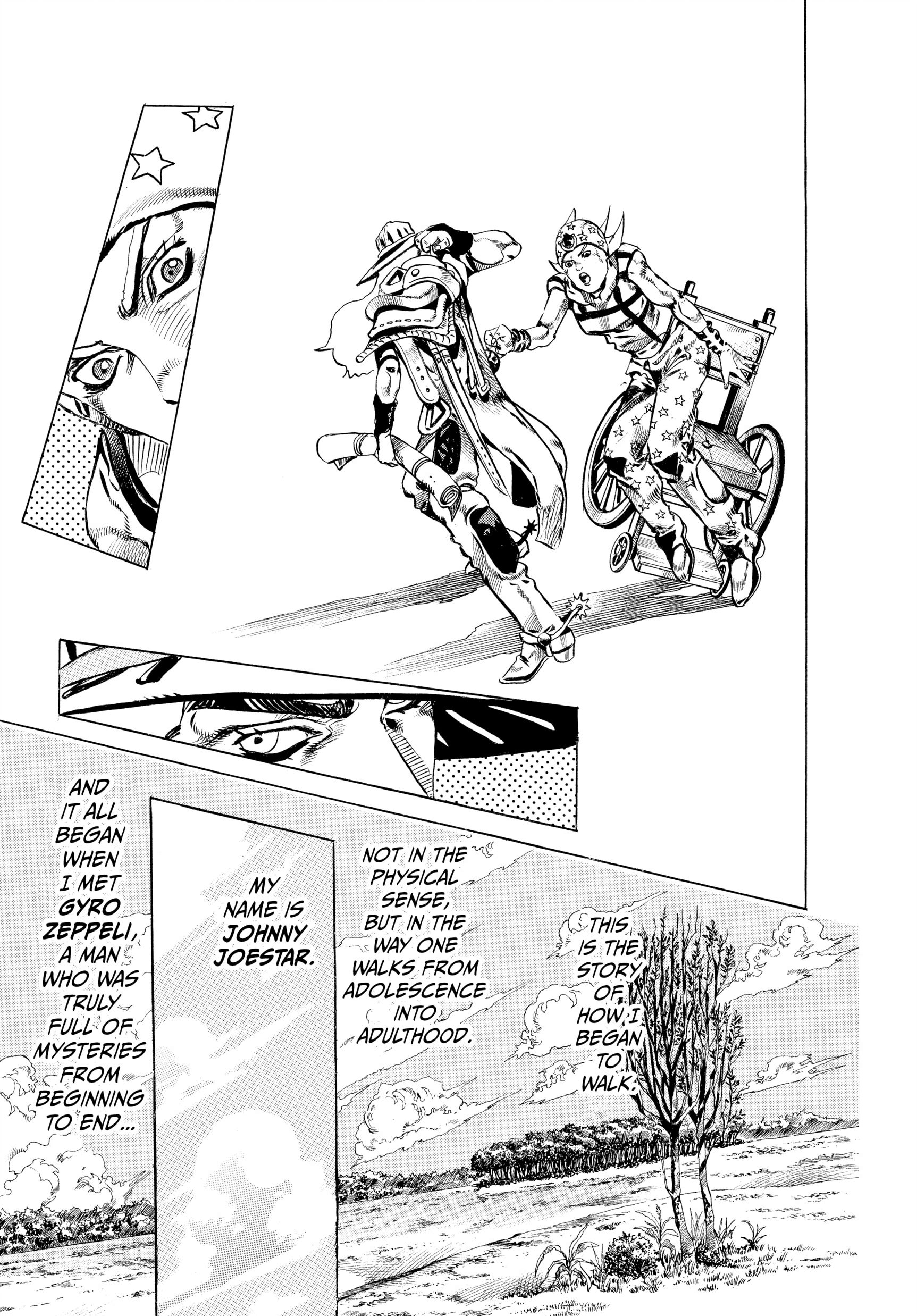

SWRRRR
WRRR
WRRR
UAAA AAH!
WHRL
AA AH!
WHRL
WHRL
WHRL
WHRL
DROP THE GUN... AND GO SEE A DOCTOR.
I'M NOT A NICE GUY, SO THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE.
BEST GET THERE BEFORE LUNCH.

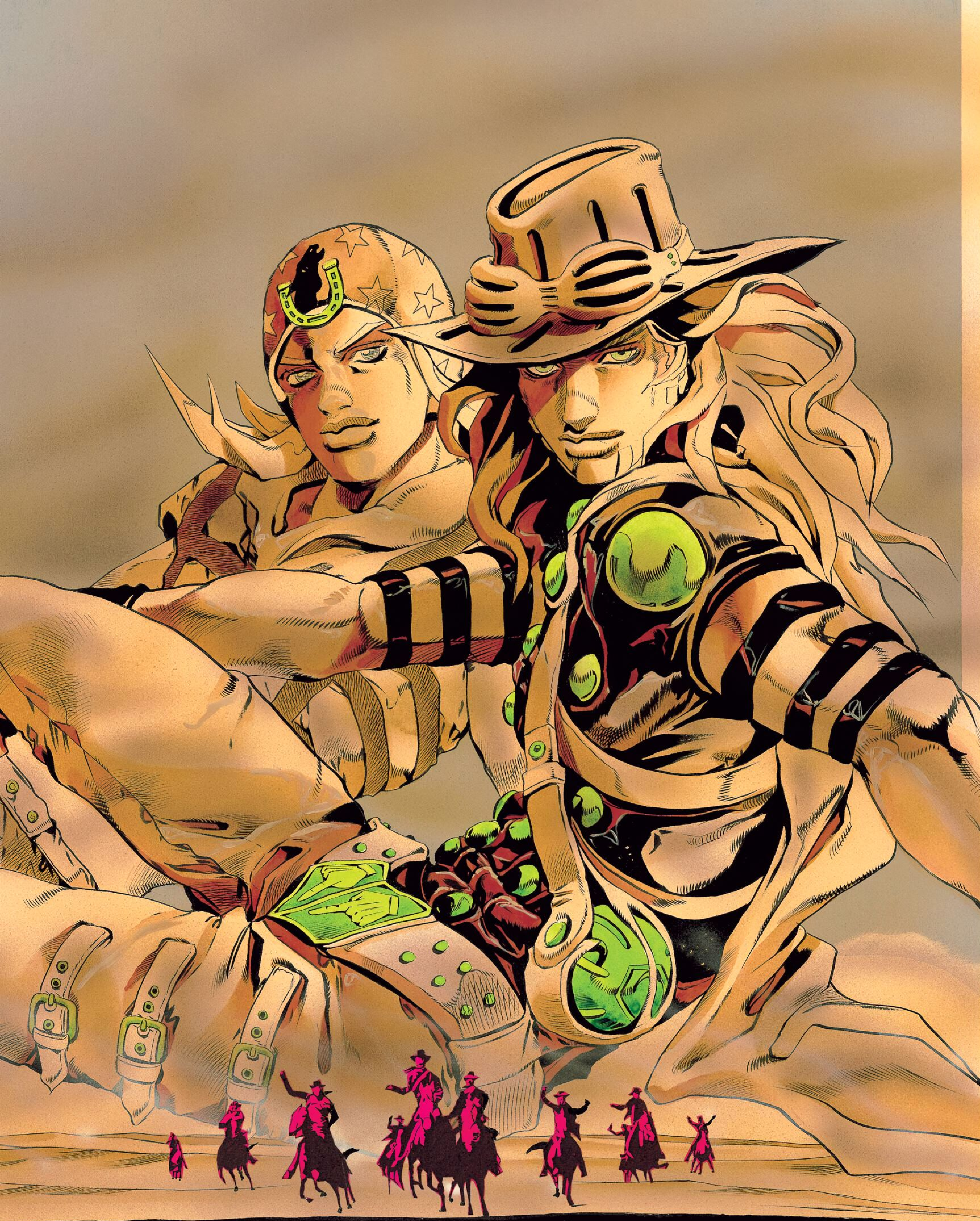

IN DIEGO
NY
YOU BAS-
TARD
!!
WHRL
DDD


ドグオォォ
BANG
BINGS
AIIIEE
EEE!!

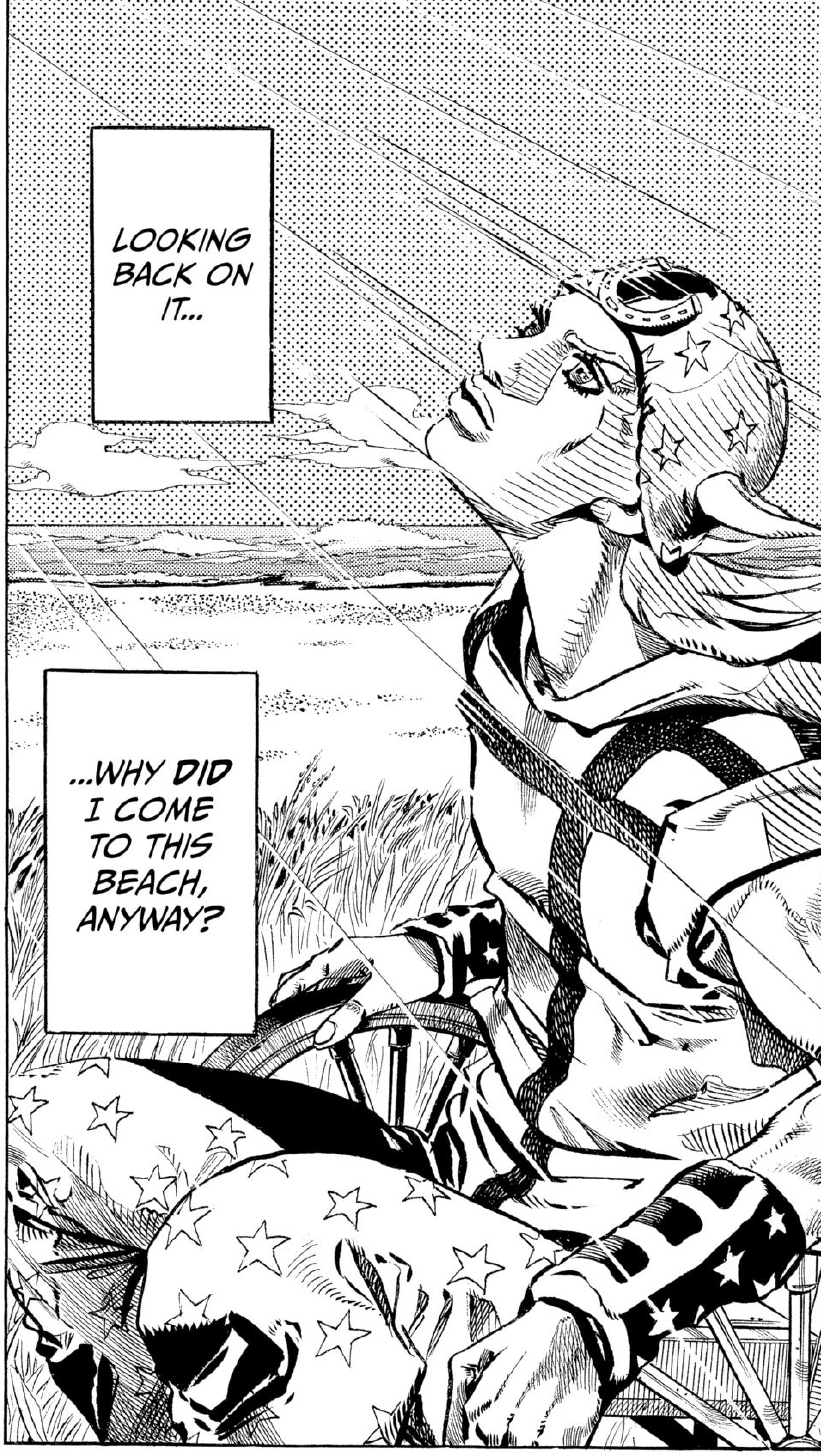

SWSH
クルッ
SHERIFF!
SH- SHOULD WE...?!
NO...
SB
SHERIFF
NOTHIN' WORTH WORRYING ABOUT HERE. IT WAS JUST A *DUEL.*
MAN DIDN'T BREAK ANY LAWS. LET HIM GO.
IT WAS A FAIR FIGHT. BOTH PARTIES AGREED TO IT.
DID YOU SEE THAT?! WHAT DID HE DO?
HE THREW THAT STEEL BALL-LOOKIN' THING IN HIS HOLSTER AT THE GUY WITH THE GUN!
THEN IT BOUNCED STRAIGHT BACK TO HIM ON A TOTAL FLUKE!
NO... HE'S WRONG.
OUT OF MY WAY!
I TOLD YOU GUYS TO MOVE! LET ME THROUGH!!
THAT WASN'T IT...
IT WASN'T A FLUKE! THE STEEL BALL WAS SPINNING... AND FAST! IT KEPT SPINNING EVEN AFTER IT DUG INTO THE GUNMAN'S ARM.
OW! WATCH IT, PUNK!
HEY, YOU!
WHAT'S WITH THAT STEEL BALL?

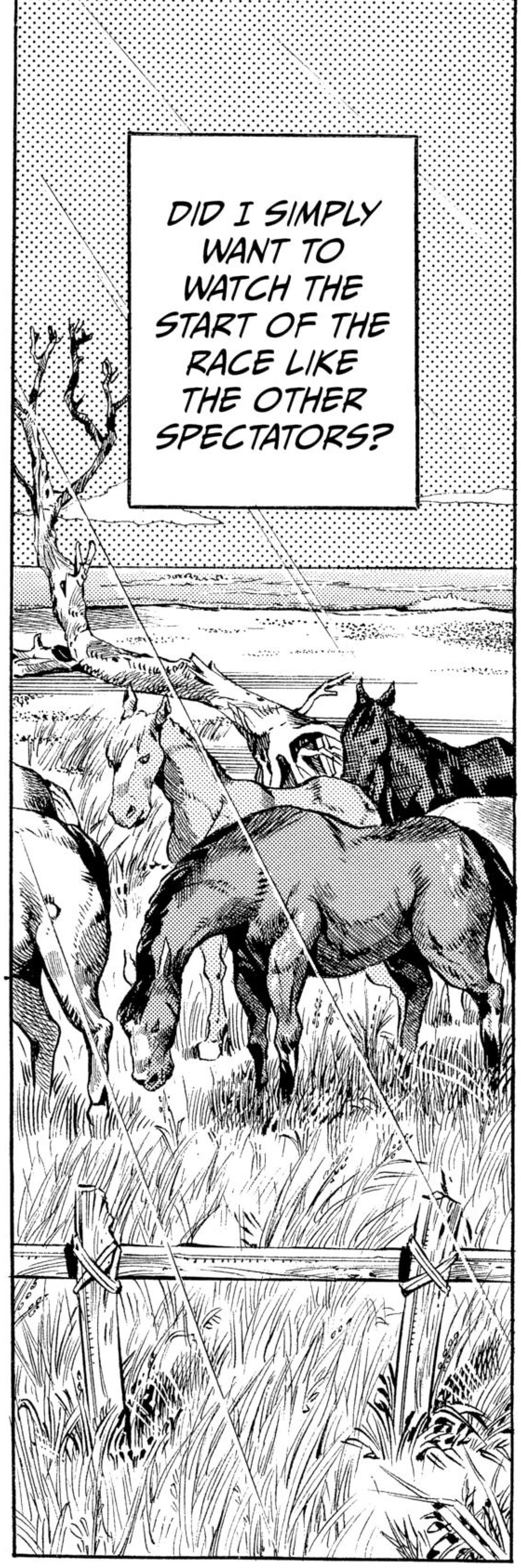

PLEASE, I JUST WANT TO GET ONE MORE LOOK AT IT!
SHF
HEY, DON'T TOUCH THAT! IT'S STILL SPINNING!
ZWOOOOM
TILT

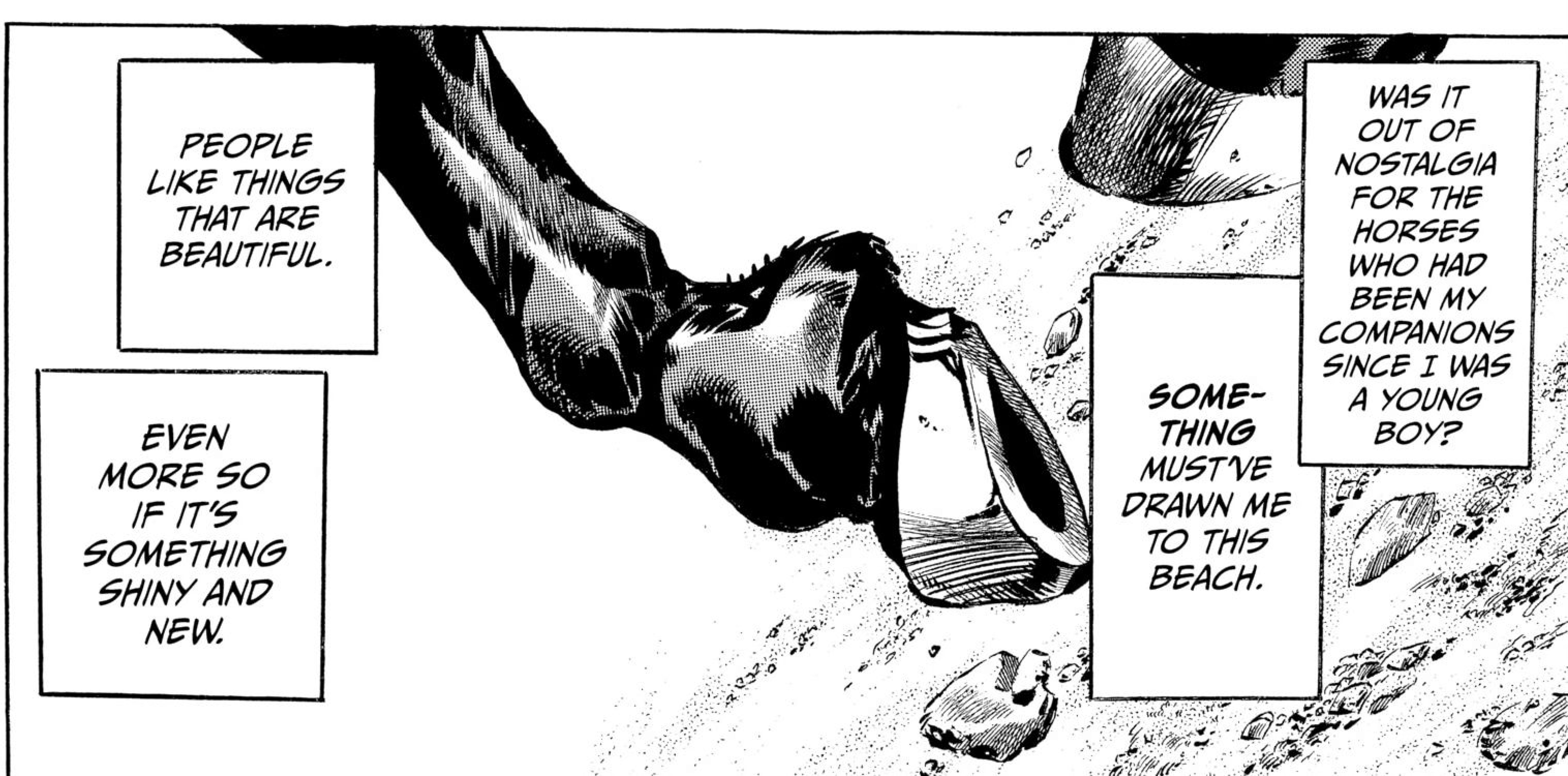

THIS IS THE STORY OF HOW I BEGAN TO WALK.
NOT IN THE PHYSICAL SENSE, BUT IN THE WAY ONE WALKS FROM ADOLESCENCE INTO ADULTHOOD.
MY NAME IS **JOHNNY JOESTAR.**
AND IT ALL BEGAN WHEN I MET **GYRO ZEPPELI,** A MAN WHO WAS TRULY FULL OF MYSTERIES FROM BEGINNING TO END...

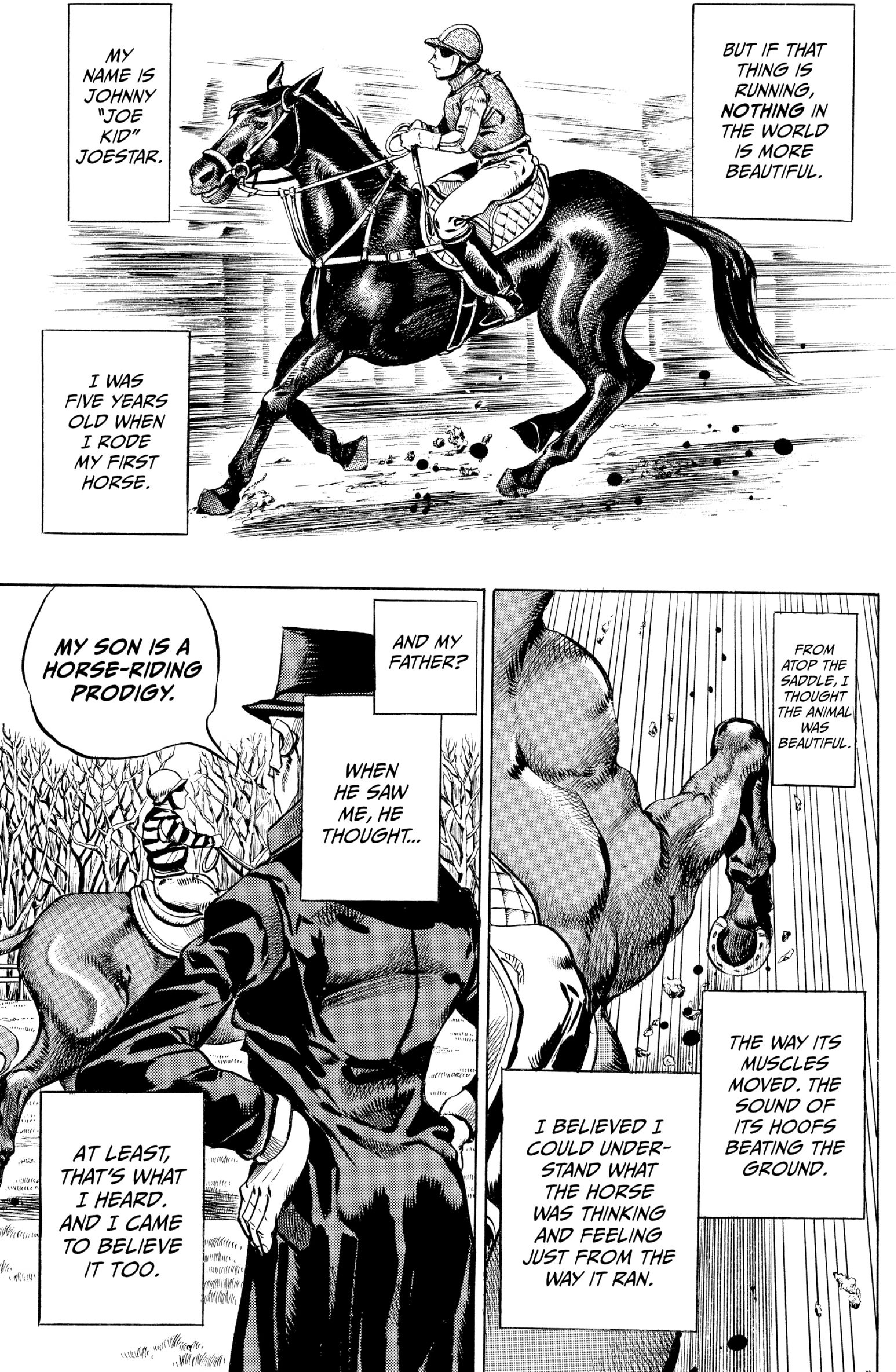


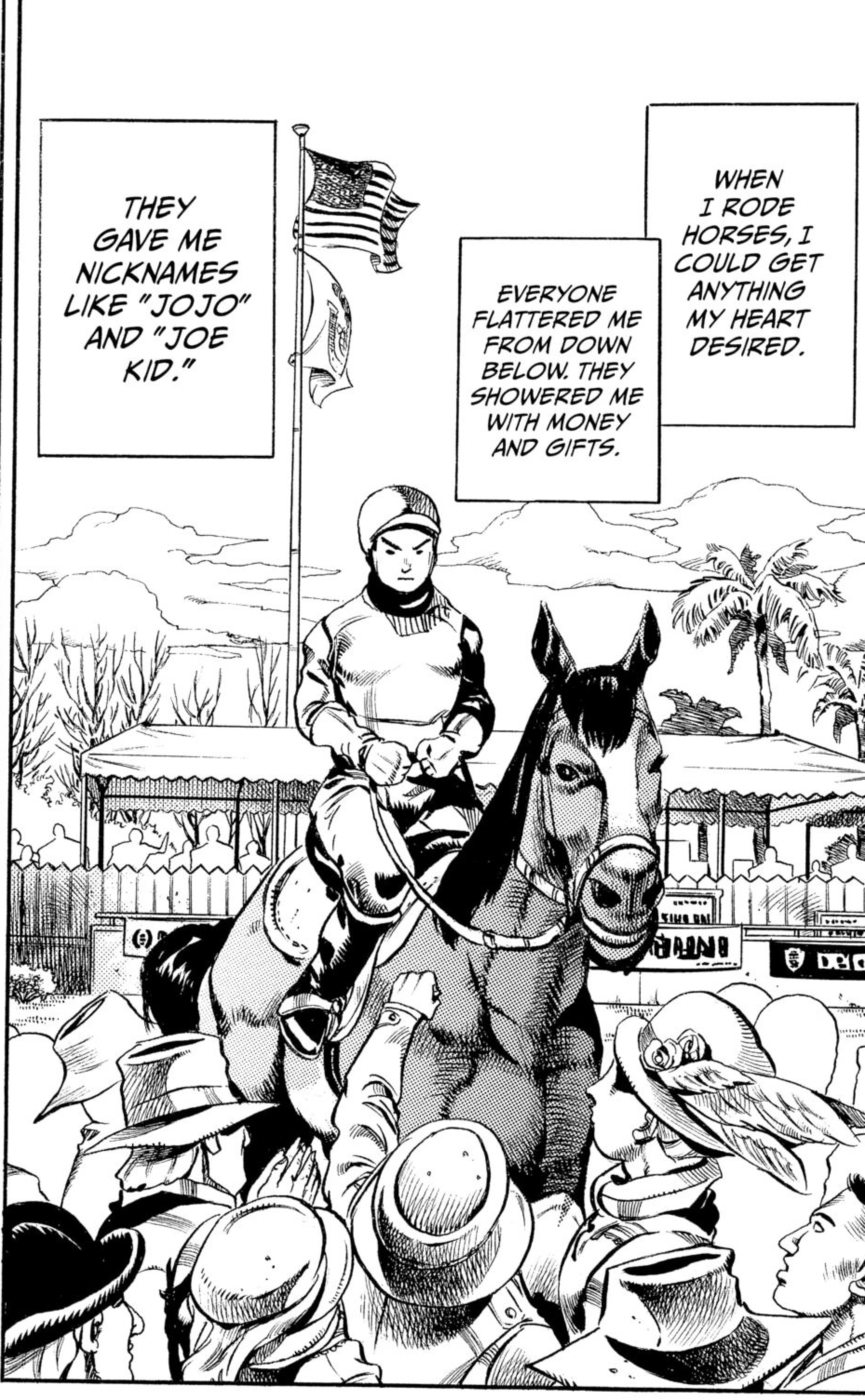
CHAPTER 3: Johnny Joestar

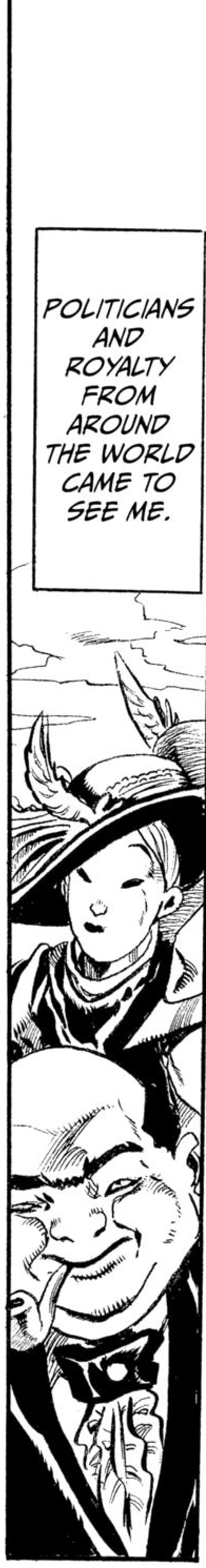

LOOKING BACK ON IT...
...WHY **DID** I COME TO THIS BEACH, ANYWAY?

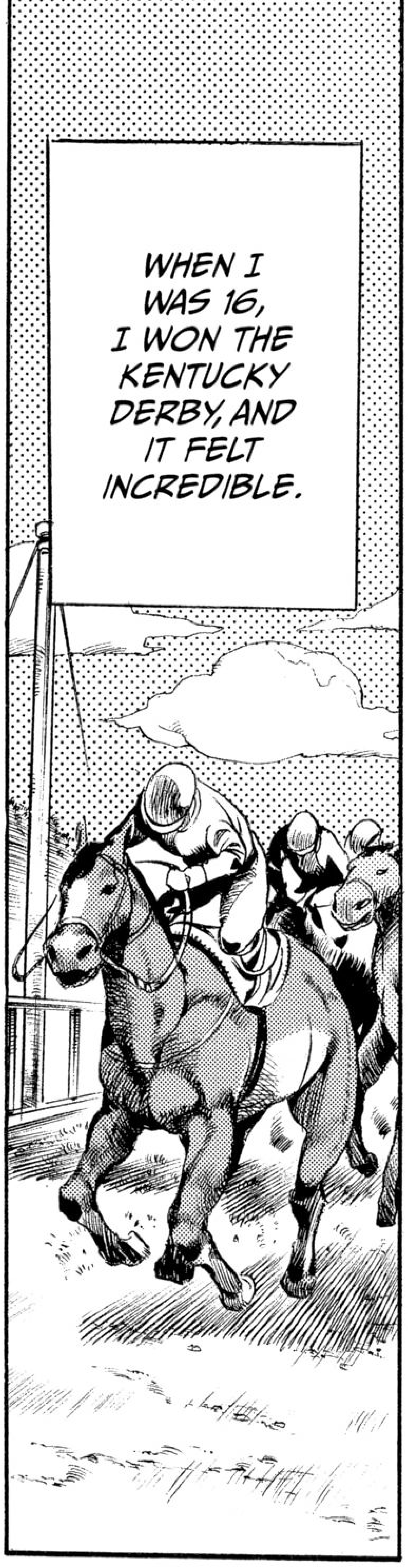

DID I SIMPLY WANT TO WATCH THE START OF THE RACE LIKE THE OTHER SPECTATORS?

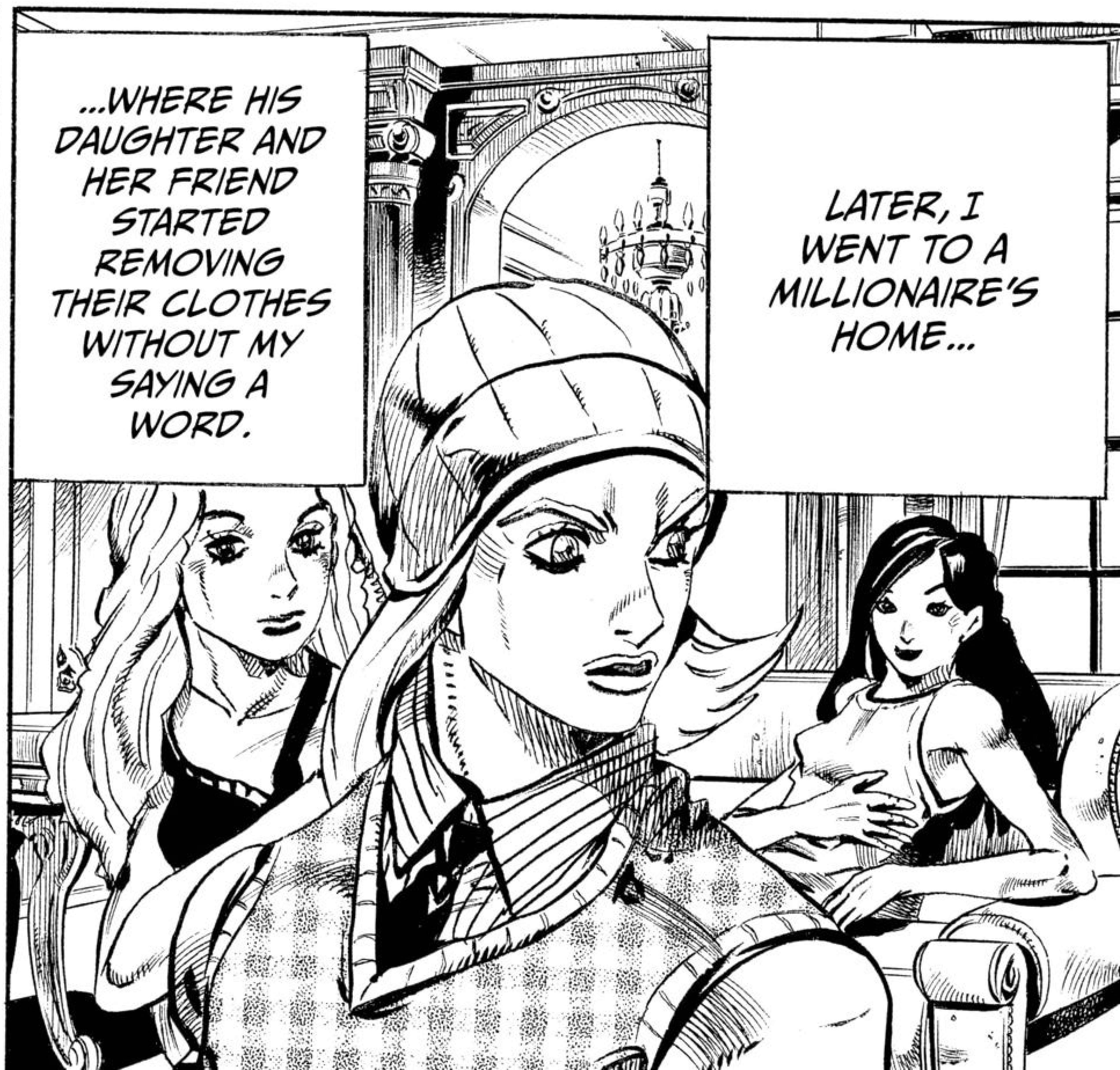

WAS IT OUT OF NOSTALGIA FOR THE HORSES WHO HAD BEEN MY COMPANIONS SINCE I WAS A YOUNG BOY?
SOME-THING MUST'VE DRAWN ME TO THIS BEACH.
PEOPLE LIKE THINGS THAT ARE BEAUTIFUL.
EVEN MORE SO IF IT'S SOMETHING SHINY AND NEW.

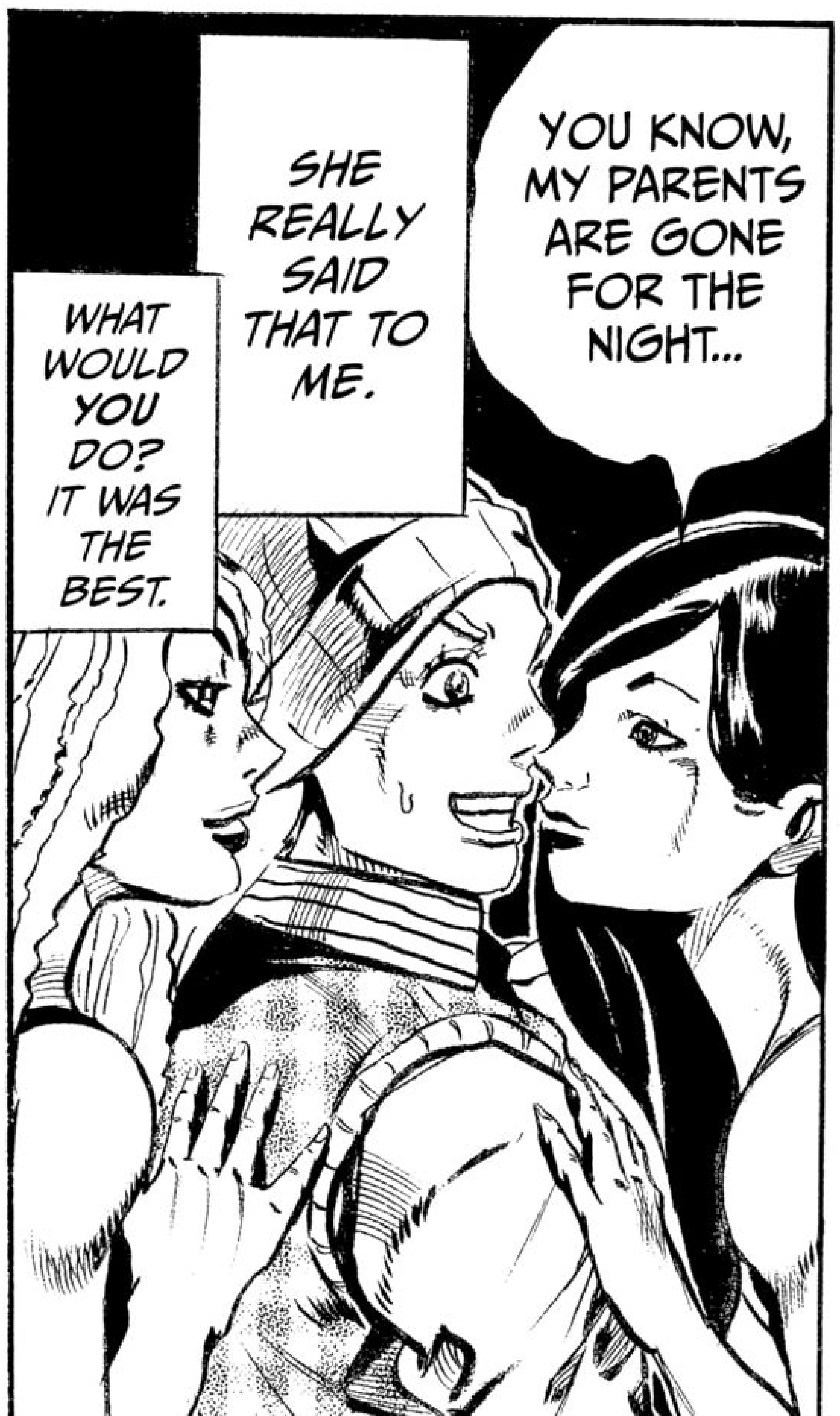

BUT IF THAT THING IS RUNNING, **NOTHING** IN THE WORLD IS MORE BEAUTIFUL.
MY NAME IS JOHNNY "JOE KID" JOESTAR.
I WAS FIVE YEARS OLD WHEN I RODE MY FIRST HORSE.
FROM ATOP THE SADDLE, I THOUGHT THE ANIMAL WAS BEAUTIFUL.
THE WAY ITS MUSCLES MOVED. THE SOUND OF ITS HOOFS BEATING THE GROUND.
I BELIEVED I COULD UNDERSTAND WHAT THE HORSE WAS THINKING AND FEELING JUST FROM THE WAY IT RAN.
MY SON IS A HORSE-RIDING PRODIGY.
AND MY FATHER?
WHEN HE SAW ME, HE THOUGHT...
AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT I HEARD. AND I CAME TO BELIEVE IT TOO.

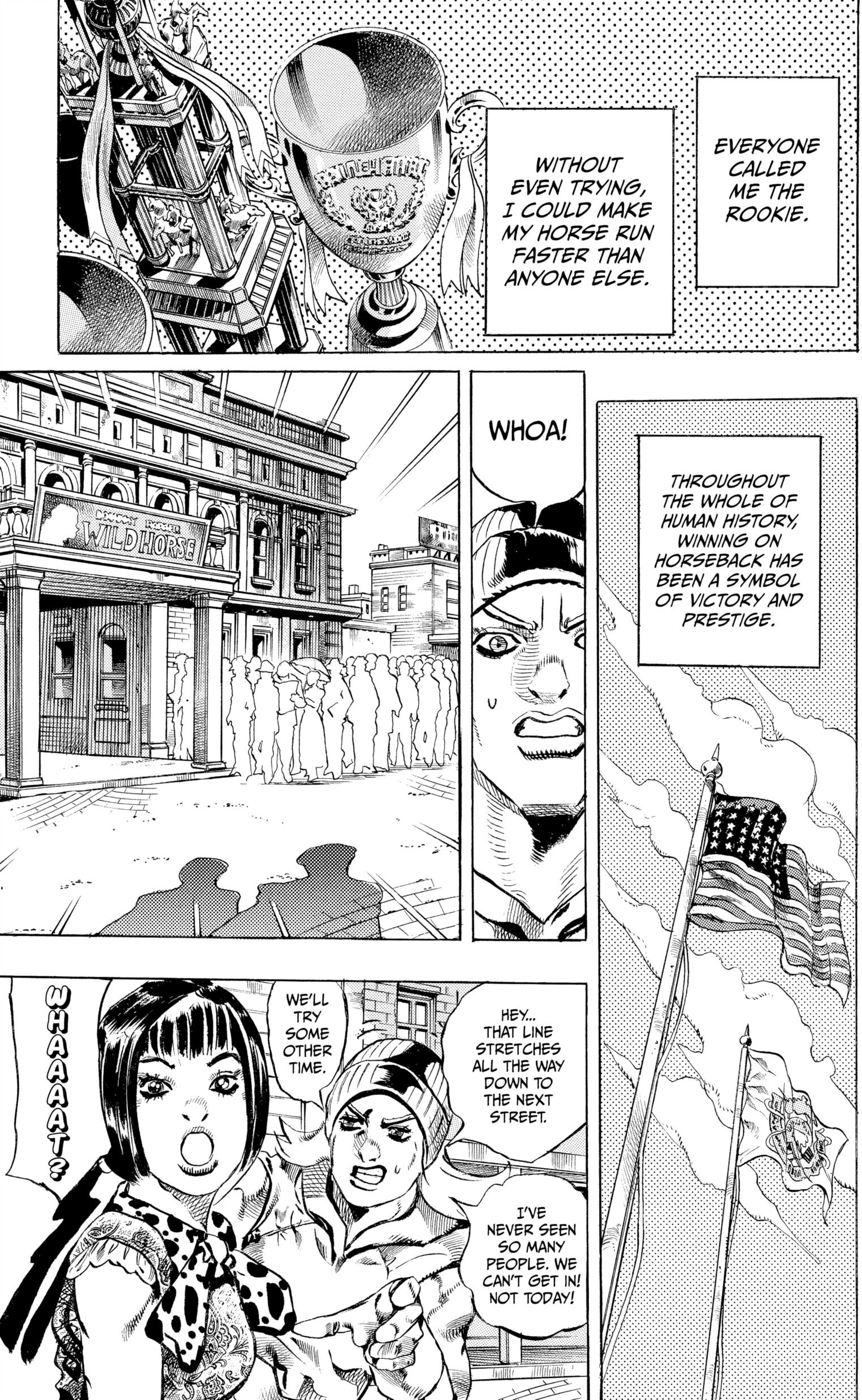

WHEN I RODE HORSES, I COULD GET ANYTHING MY HEART DESIRED.
EVERYONE FLATTERED ME FROM DOWN BELOW. THEY SHOWERED ME WITH MONEY AND GIFTS.
THEY GAVE ME NICKNAMES LIKE "JOJO" AND "JOE KID."

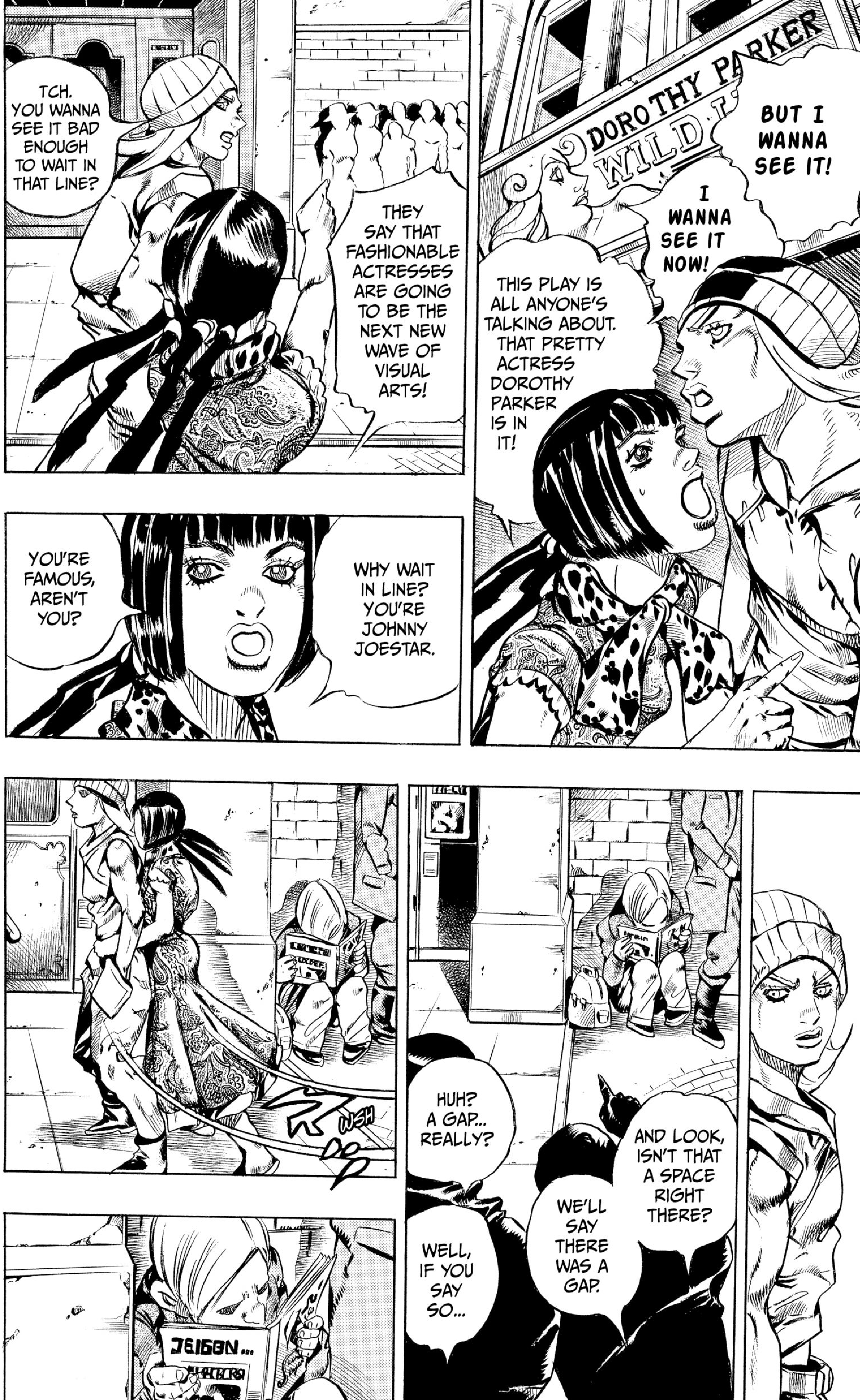

POLITICIANS AND ROYALTY FROM AROUND THE WORLD CAME TO SEE ME.

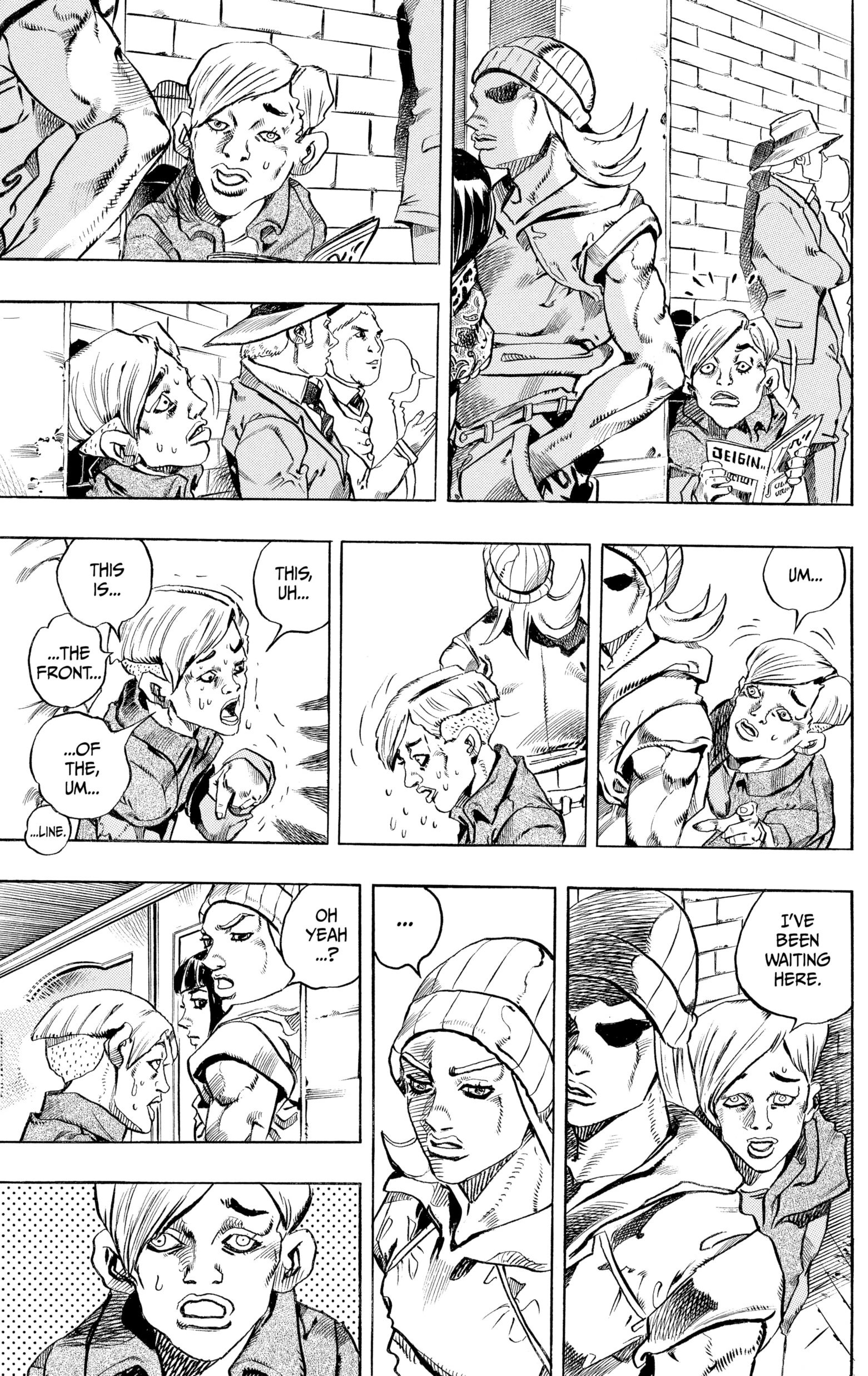

WHEN I WAS 16, I WON THE KENTUCKY DERBY, AND IT FELT INCREDIBLE.

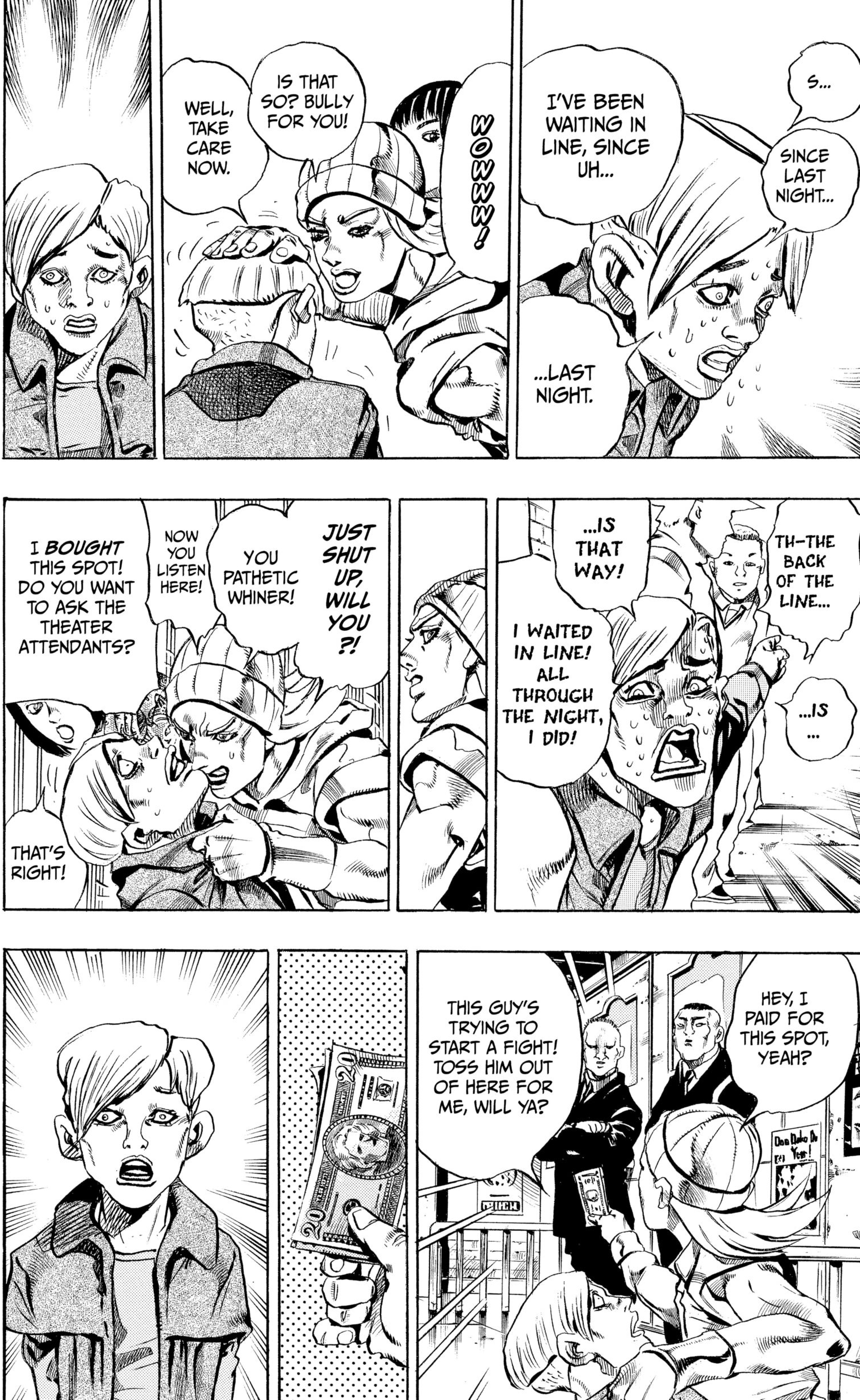

LATER, I WENT TO A MILLIONAIRE'S HOME...
...WHERE HIS DAUGHTER AND HER FRIEND STARTED REMOVING THEIR CLOTHES WITHOUT MY SAYING A WORD.

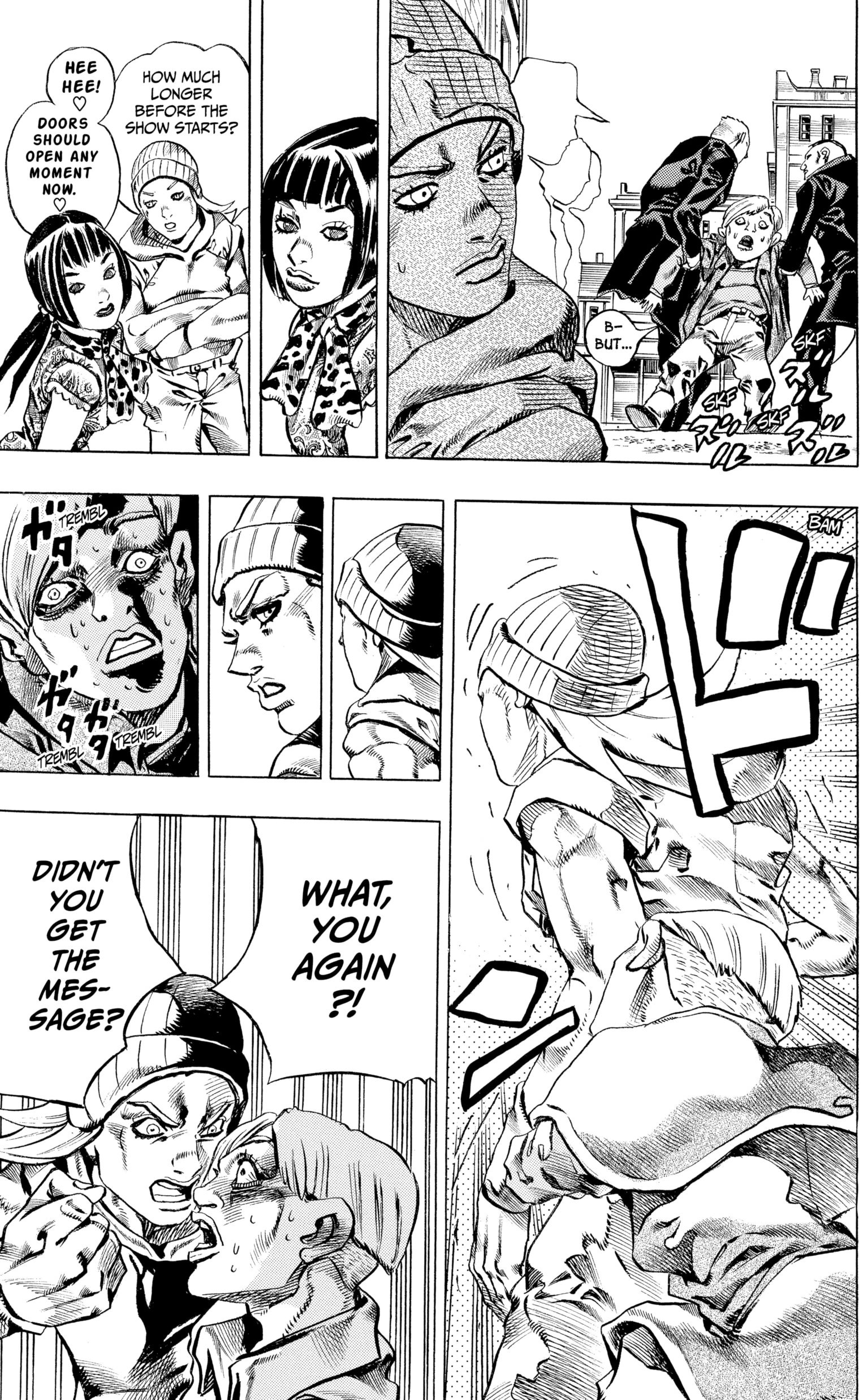

YOU KNOW, MY PARENTS ARE GONE FOR THE NIGHT...
SHE REALLY SAID THAT TO ME.
WHAT WOULD YOU DO? IT WAS THE BEST.

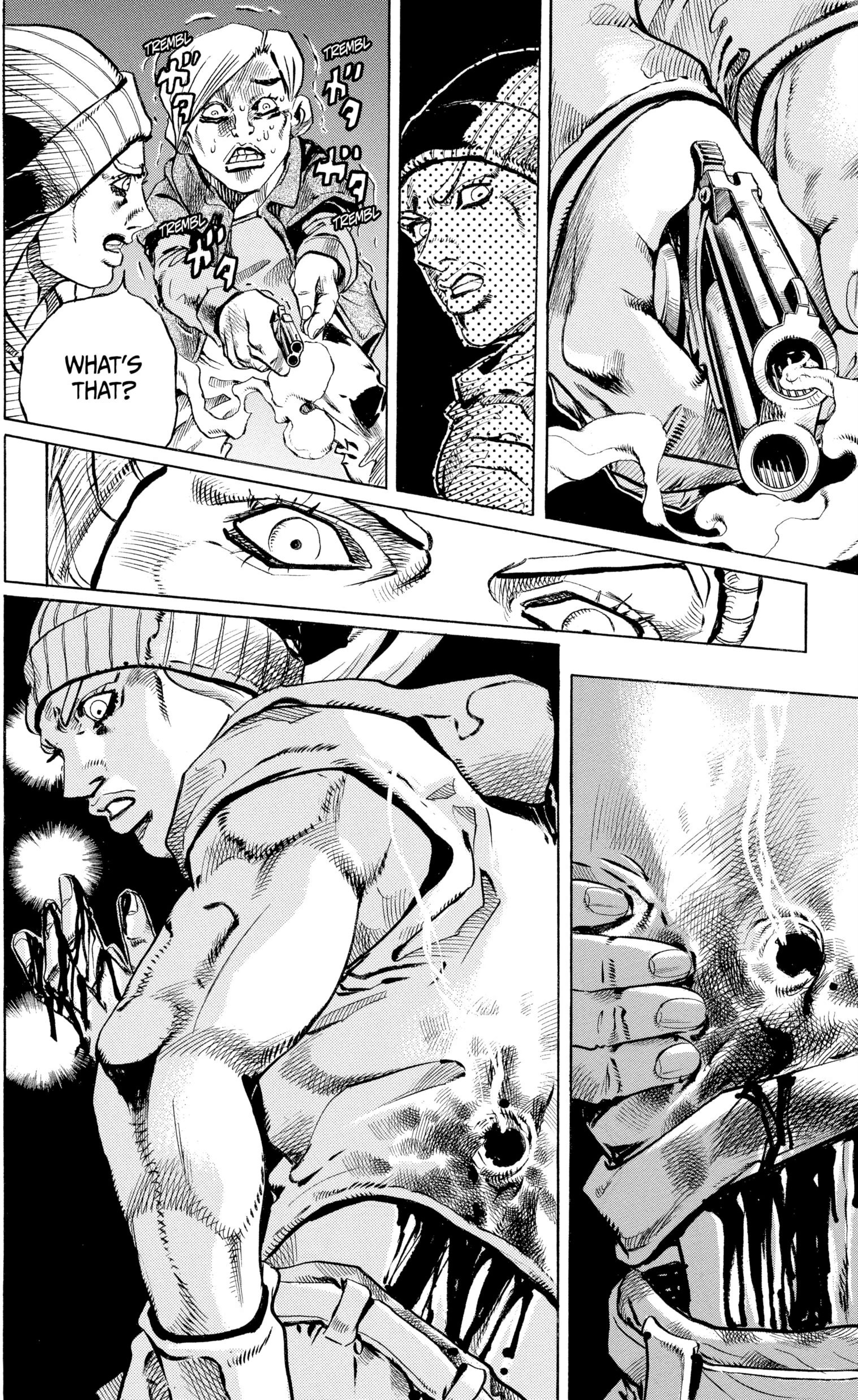

EVERYONE CALLED ME THE ROOKIE.
WITHOUT EVEN TRYING, I COULD MAKE MY HORSE RUN FASTER THAN ANYONE ELSE.
THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE OF HUMAN HISTORY, WINNING ON HORSEBACK HAS BEEN A SYMBOL OF VICTORY AND PRESTIGE.
WHOA!
WILD HORSE
HEY... THAT LINE STRETCHES ALL THE WAY DOWN TO THE NEXT STREET.
I'VE NEVER SEEN SO MANY PEOPLE. WE CAN'T GET IN! NOT TODAY!
WE'LL TRY SOME OTHER TIME.
WHAAAAAT?!

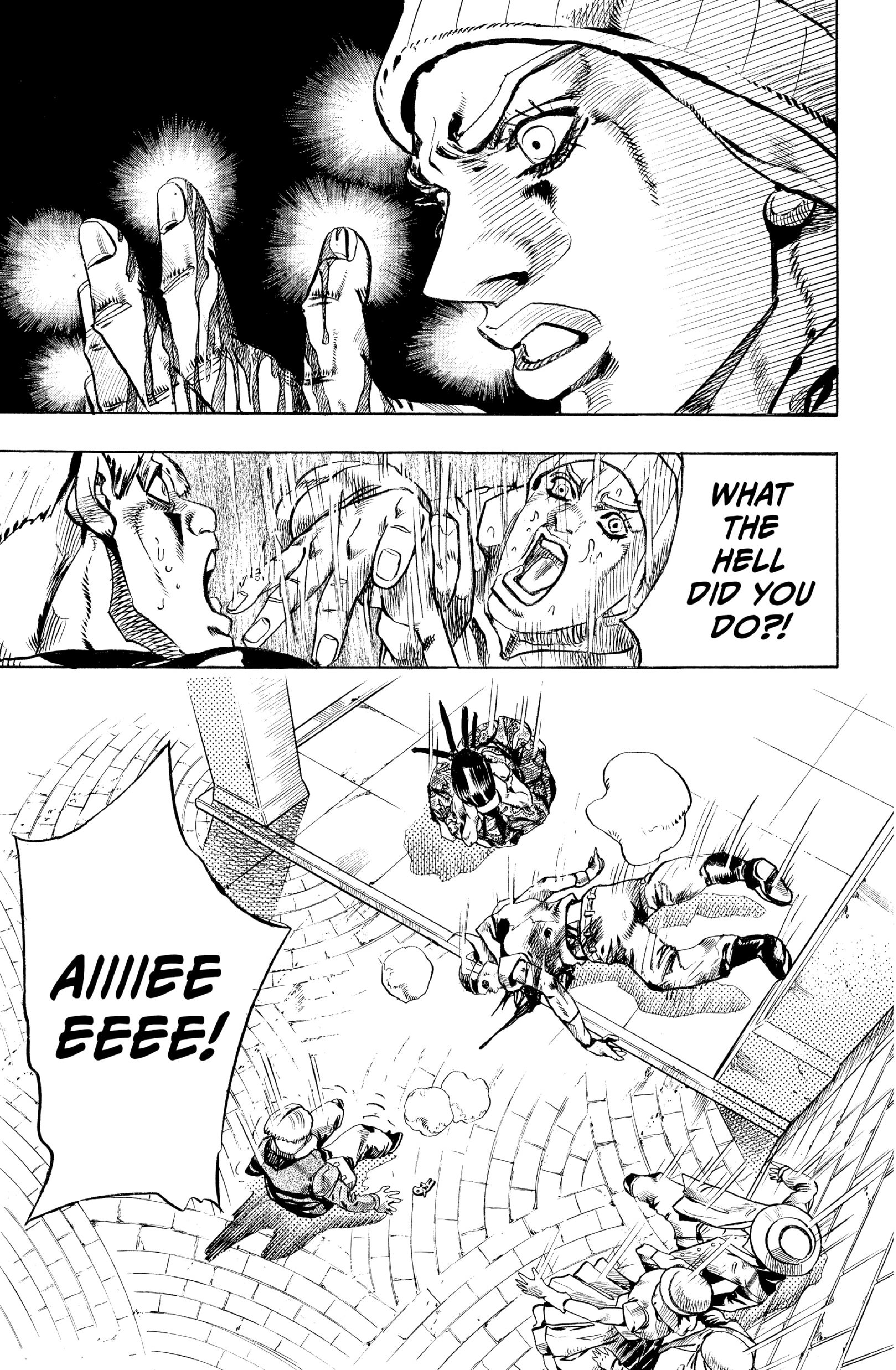

DOROTHY PARKER
WILD
BUT I WANNA SEE IT!
I WANNA SEE IT NOW!
THIS PLAY IS ALL ANYONE'S TALKING ABOUT. THAT PRETTY ACTRESS DOROTHY PARKER IS IN IT!
TCH. YOU WANNA SEE IT BAD ENOUGH TO WAIT IN THAT LINE?
THEY SAY THAT FASHIONABLE ACTRESSES ARE GOING TO BE THE NEXT NEW WAVE OF VISUAL ARTS!
WHY WAIT IN LINE? YOU'RE JOHNNY JOESTAR.
YOU'RE FAMOUS, AREN'T YOU?
AND LOOK, ISN'T THAT A SPACE RIGHT THERE?
WE'LL SAY THERE WAS A GAP.
HUH? A GAP... REALLY?
WELL, IF YOU SAY SO...
WSH

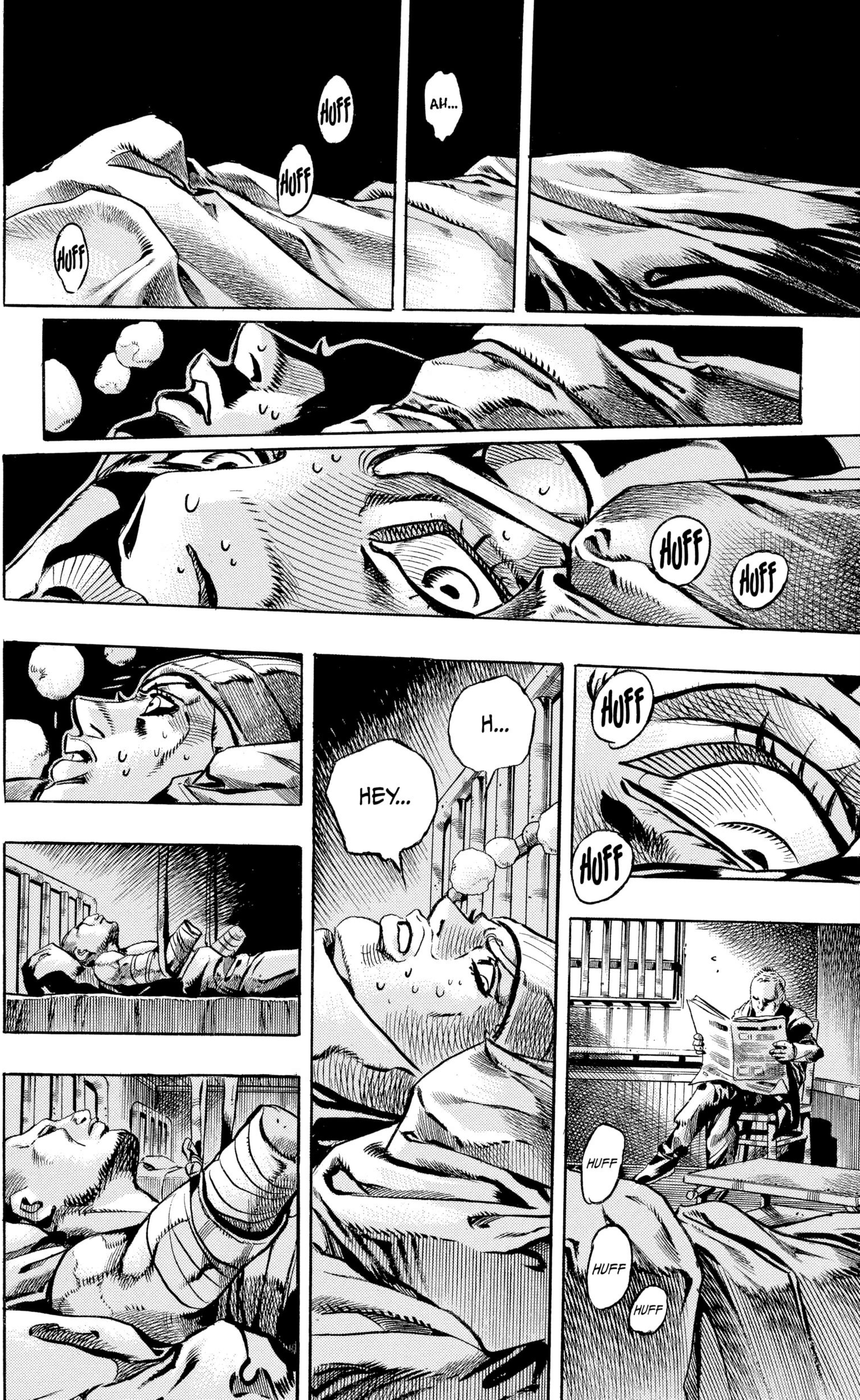

UM...
THIS, UH...
THIS IS...
...THE FRONT...
...OF THE, UM...
...LINE.
I'VE BEEN WAITING HERE.
...
OH YEAH ...?

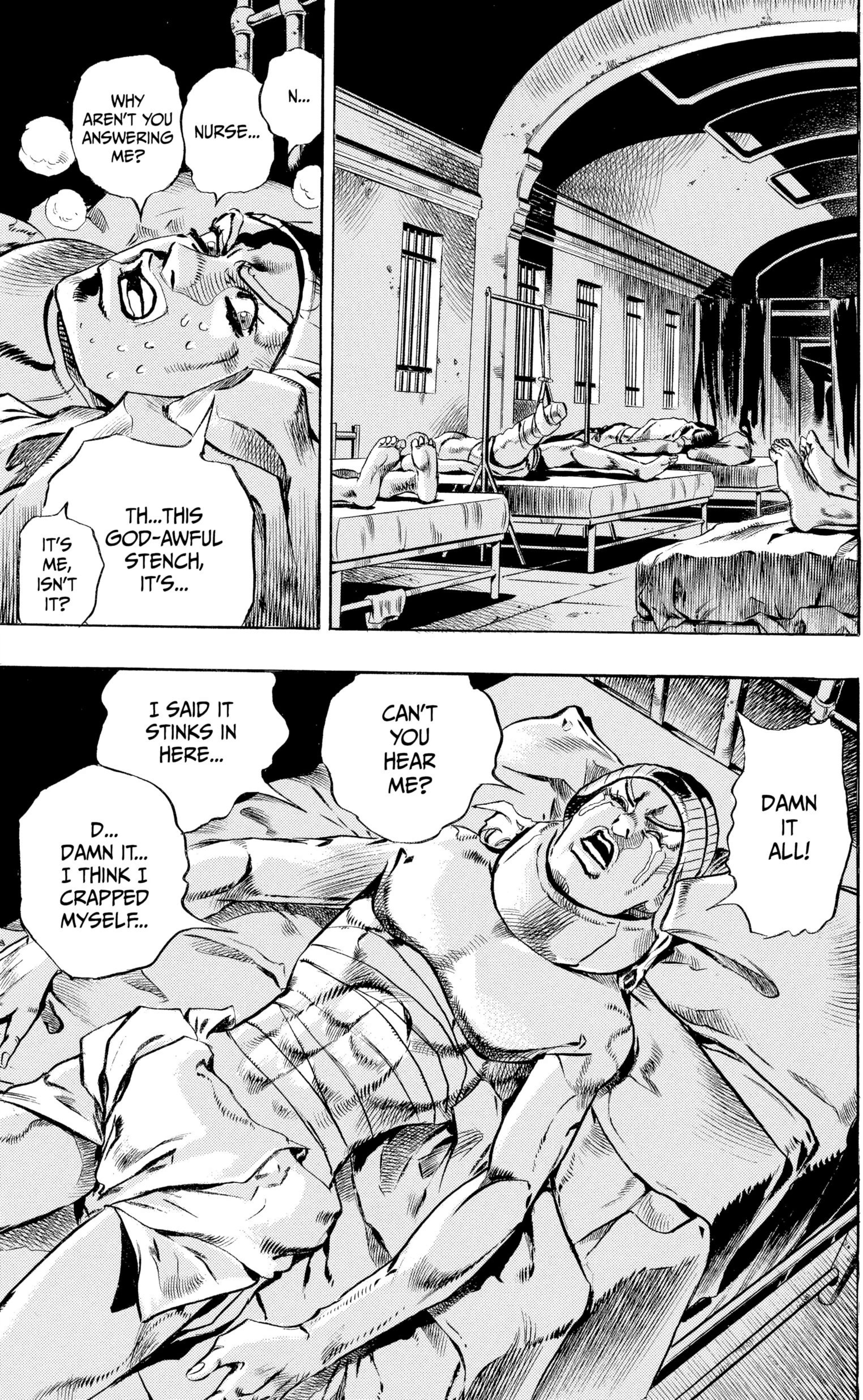

I'VE BEEN WAITING IN LINE, SINCE UH...
S...
SINCE LAST NIGHT...
...LAST NIGHT.
WOWWWW!
IS THAT SO? BULLY FOR YOU!
WELL, TAKE CARE NOW.
TH-THE BACK OF THE LINE...
...IS ...
...IS THAT WAY!
I WAITED IN LINE! ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT, I DID!
JUST SHUT UP, WILL YOU?!
YOU PATHETIC WHINER!
NOW YOU LISTEN HERE!
I BOUGHT THIS SPOT! DO YOU WANT TO ASK THE THEATER ATTENDANTS?
THAT'S RIGHT!
HEY, I PAID FOR THIS SPOT, YEAH?
THIS GUY'S TRYING TO START A FIGHT! TOSS HIM OUT OF HERE FOR ME, WILL YA?

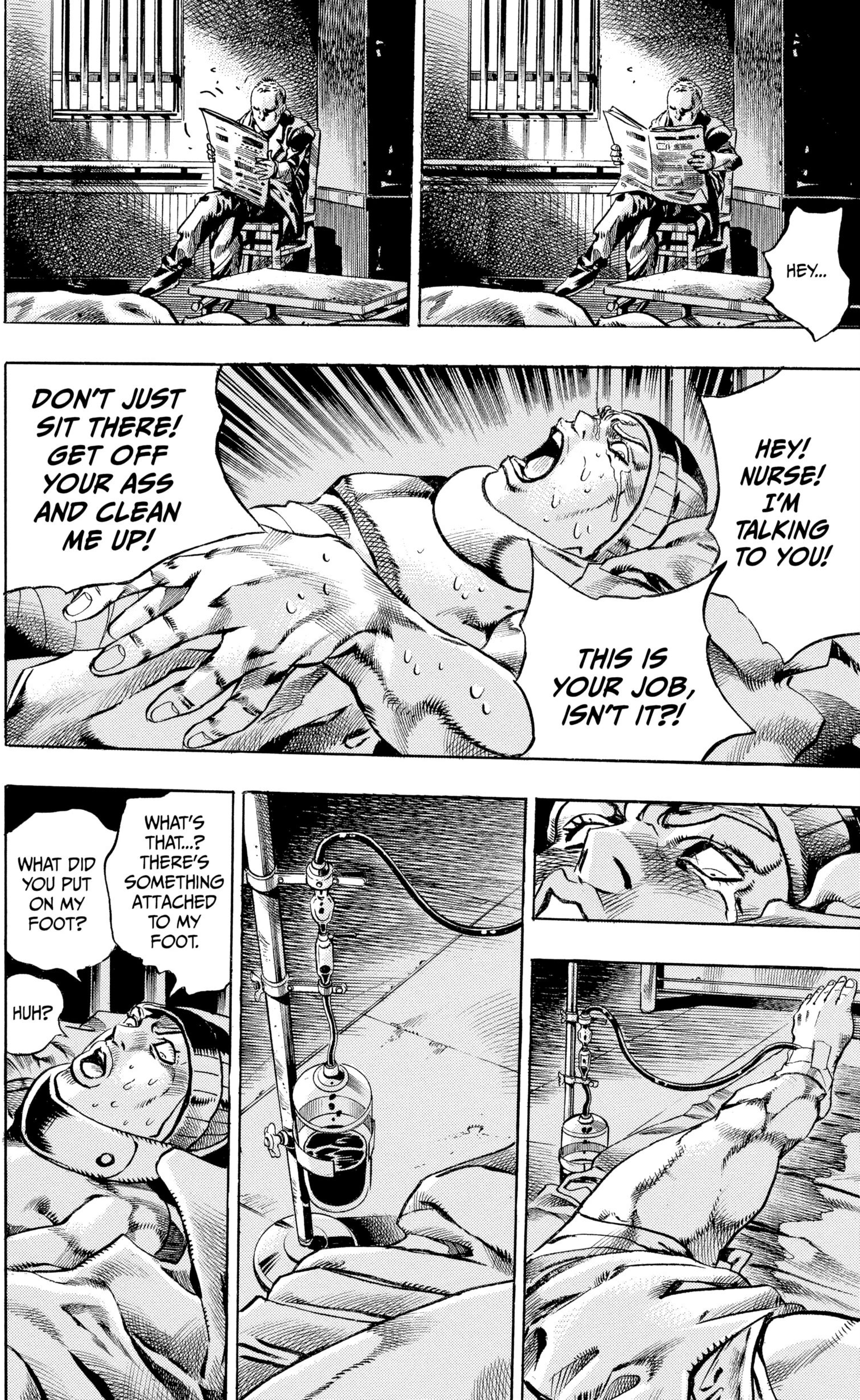

B-BUT...
SKF
SKF
SKF
HOW MUCH LONGER BEFORE THE SHOW STARTS?
HEE HEE! ♡ DOORS SHOULD OPEN ANY MOMENT NOW. ♡
BAM
TREMBL
TREMBL
TREMBL
WHAT, YOU AGAIN?!
DIDN'T YOU GET THE MES-SAGE?

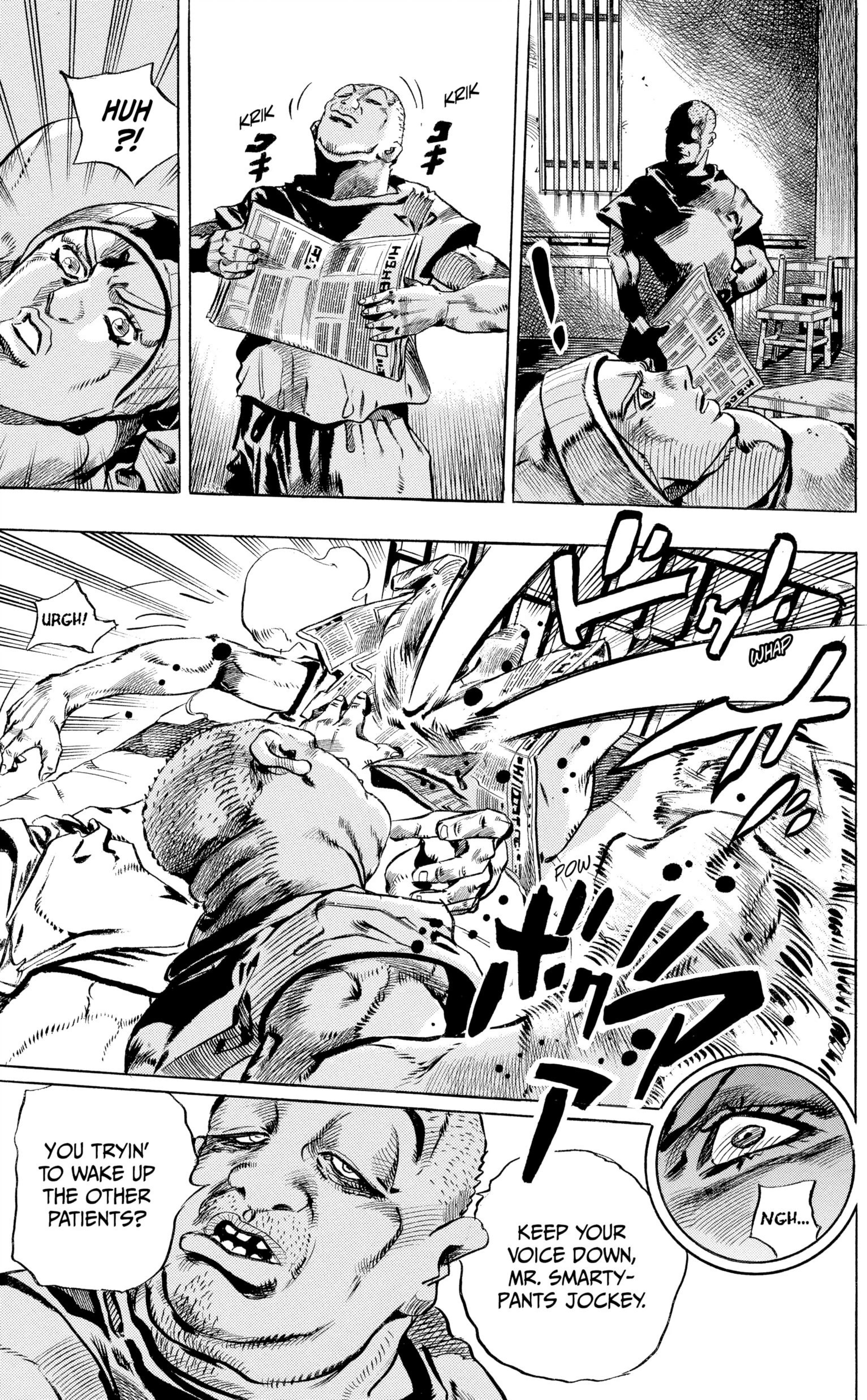

TREMBL
ガタ
TREMBL
ガタ
ガタ
TREMBL
TREMBL
ガタ
WHAT'S THAT?

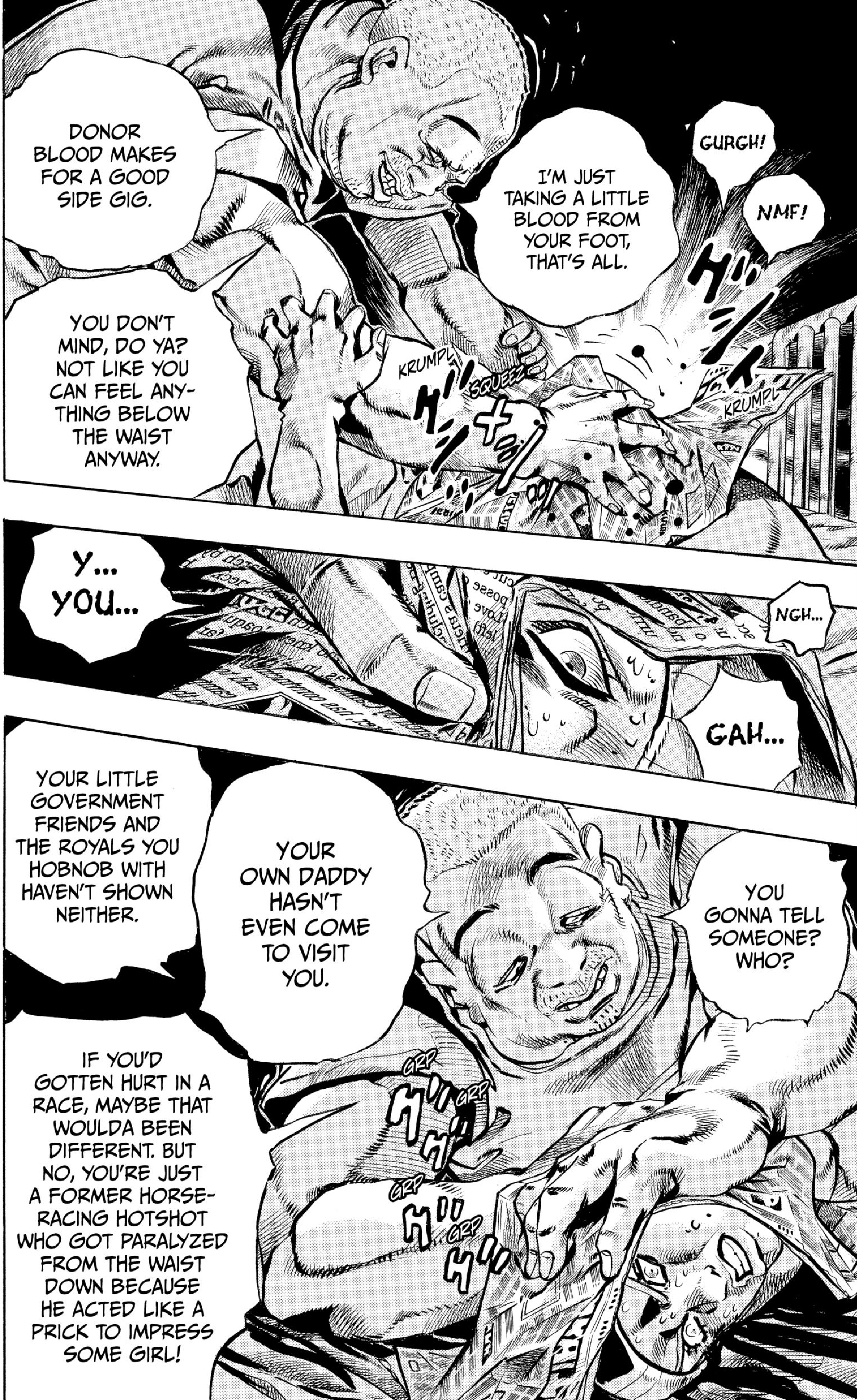

WHAT THE HELL DID YOU DO?!
AIIIIEE EEEE!

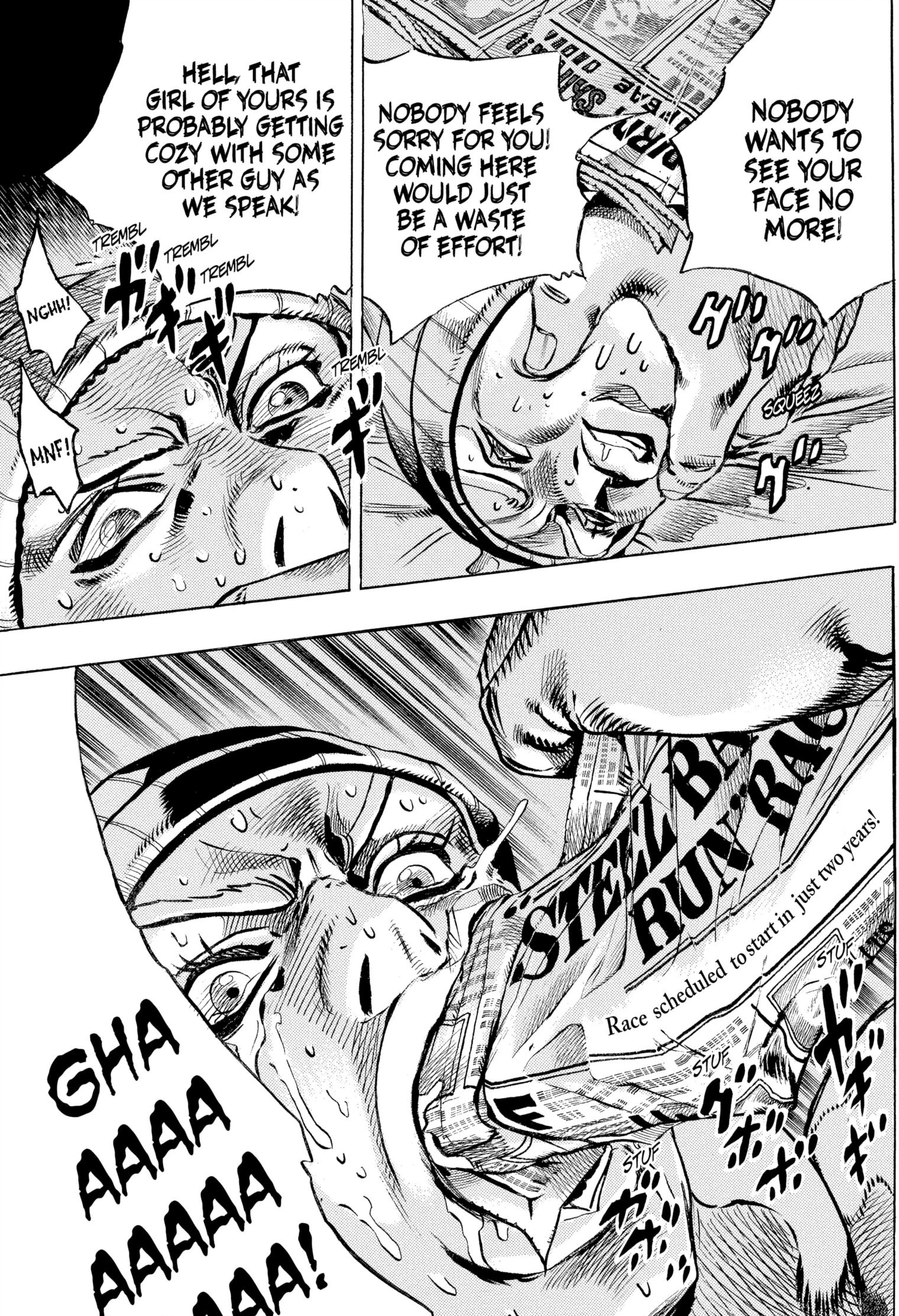

AH...
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
H...
HEY...
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF


N...
NURSE...
WHY AREN'T YOU ANSWERING ME?
TH...THIS GOD-AWFUL STENCH, IT'S...
IT'S ME, ISN'T IT?
DAMN IT ALL!
CAN'T YOU HEAR ME?
I SAID IT STINKS IN HERE...
D... DAMN IT... I THINK I CRAPPED MYSELF...

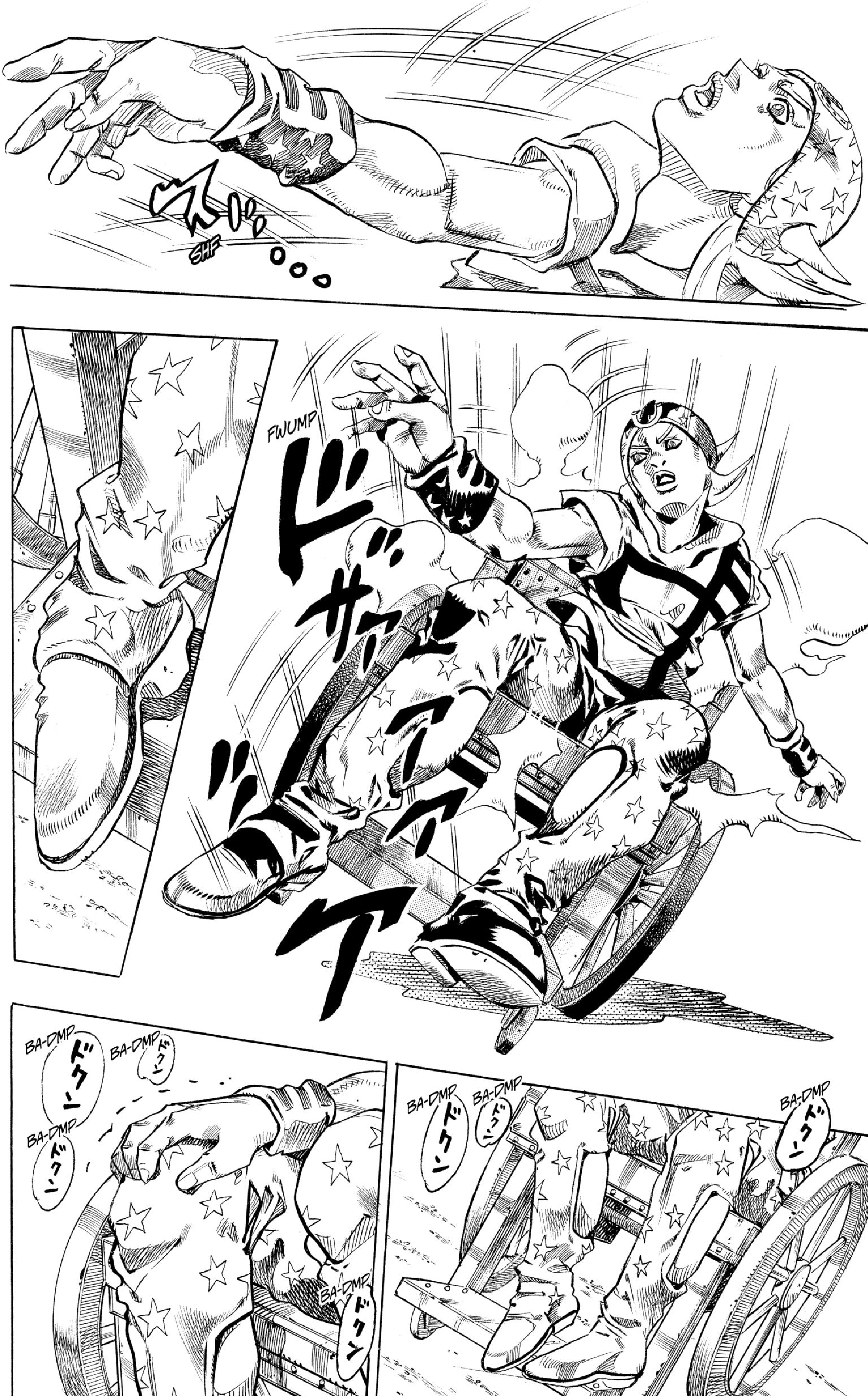

HEY...
HEY! NURSE! I'M TALKING TO YOU!
THIS IS YOUR JOB, ISN'T IT?!
DON'T JUST SIT THERE! GET OFF YOUR ASS AND CLEAN ME UP!
WHAT'S THAT...? THERE'S SOMETHING ATTACHED TO MY FOOT.
WHAT DID YOU PUT ON MY FOOT?
HUH?


!
KRIK
コキ
KRIK
コキ
HUH ?!
ドゥッ
WHAP
POW
ボグァ
URGH!
NGH...
KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN, MR. SMARTY-PANTS JOCKEY.
YOU TRYIN' TO WAKE UP THE OTHER PATIENTS?


GURGH!
NMF!
I'M JUST TAKING A LITTLE BLOOD FROM YOUR FOOT, THAT'S ALL.
DONOR BLOOD MAKES FOR A GOOD SIDE GIG.
KRUMPL
SQUEEZ
KRUMPL
YOU DON'T MIND, DO YA? NOT LIKE YOU CAN FEEL ANYTHING BELOW THE WAIST ANYWAY.
NGH...
GAH...
Y... YOU...
YOU GONNA TELL SOMEONE? WHO?
YOUR OWN DADDY HASN'T EVEN COME TO VISIT YOU.
YOUR LITTLE GOVERNMENT FRIENDS AND THE ROYALS YOU HOBNOB WITH HAVEN'T SHOWN NEITHER.
GRP
GRP
GRP
GRP
IF YOU'D GOTTEN HURT IN A RACE, MAYBE THAT WOULDA BEEN DIFFERENT. BUT NO, YOU'RE JUST A FORMER HORSE-RACING HOTSHOT WHO GOT PARALYZED FROM THE WAIST DOWN BECAUSE HE ACTED LIKE A PRICK TO IMPRESS SOME GIRL!


NOBODY WANTS TO SEE YOUR FACE NO MORE!
NOBODY FEELS SORRY FOR YOU! COMING HERE WOULD JUST BE A WASTE OF EFFORT!
SQUEEZ
HELL, THAT GIRL OF YOURS IS PROBABLY GETTING COZY WITH SOME OTHER GUY AS WE SPEAK!
TREMBL
TREMBL
TREMBL
TREMBL
NGHH!
MNF!
STEEL BALL RUN RACE
Race scheduled to start in just two years!
STUF
STUF
STUF
GHA AAAA AAAAA AAAA!

AAAA
AAAAA
AAAAA
AAHH!
DO ド
DO ドド
DO ドド
DO ドド
DO ドドドド
DO ドド


ズルッ
SHF
FWUMP
ドザァァァッ
BA-DMP
ドクン
BA-DMP
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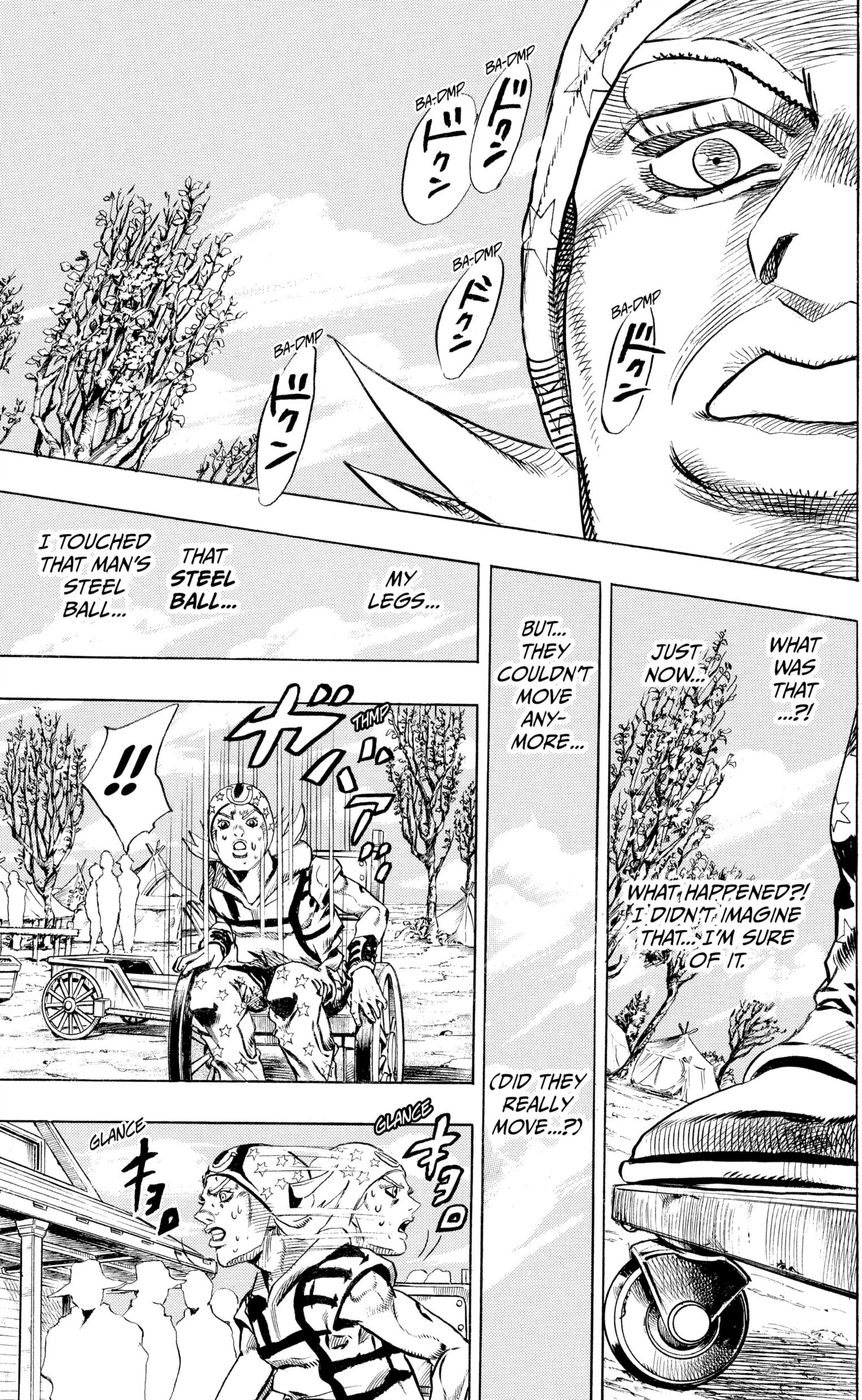
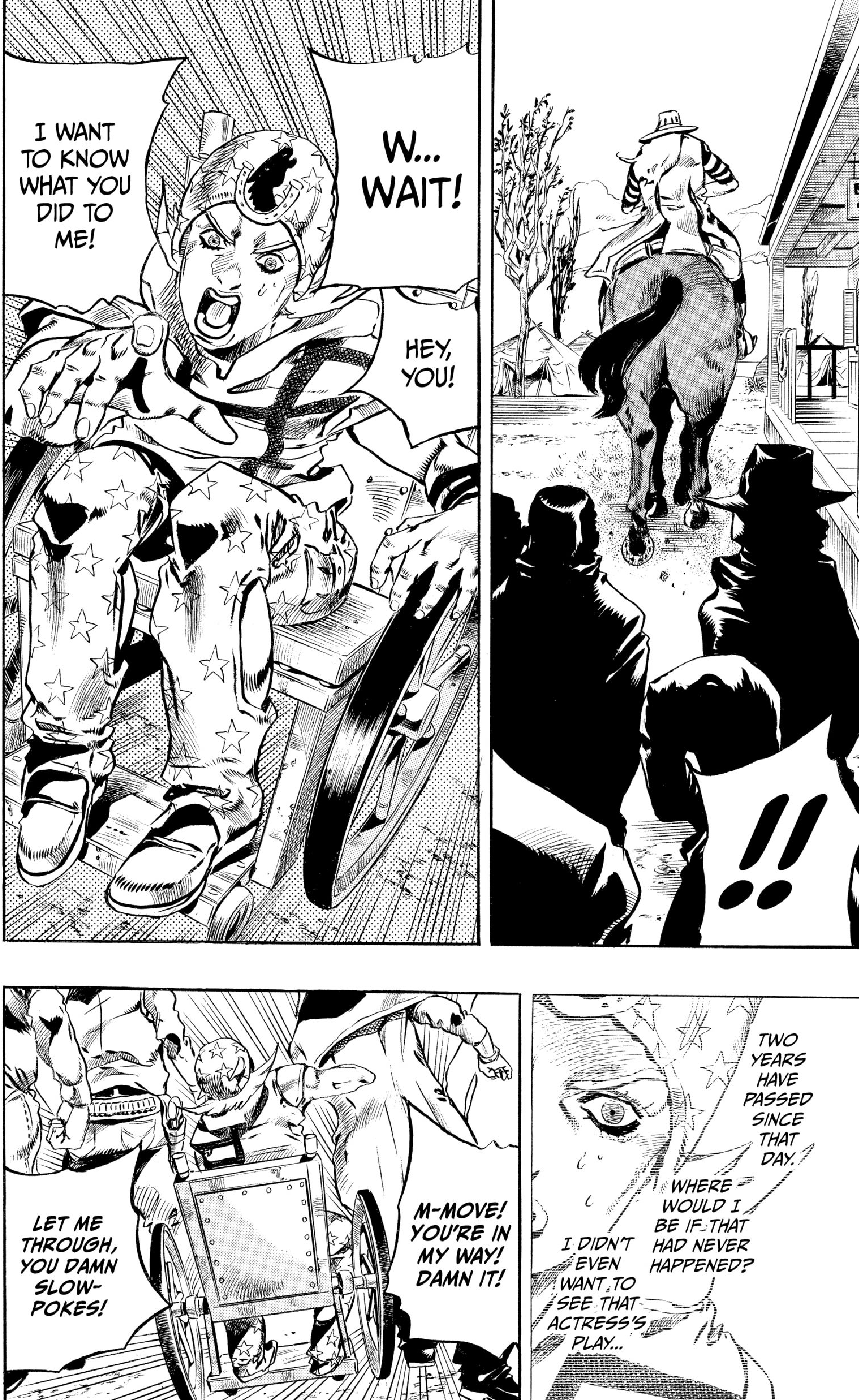
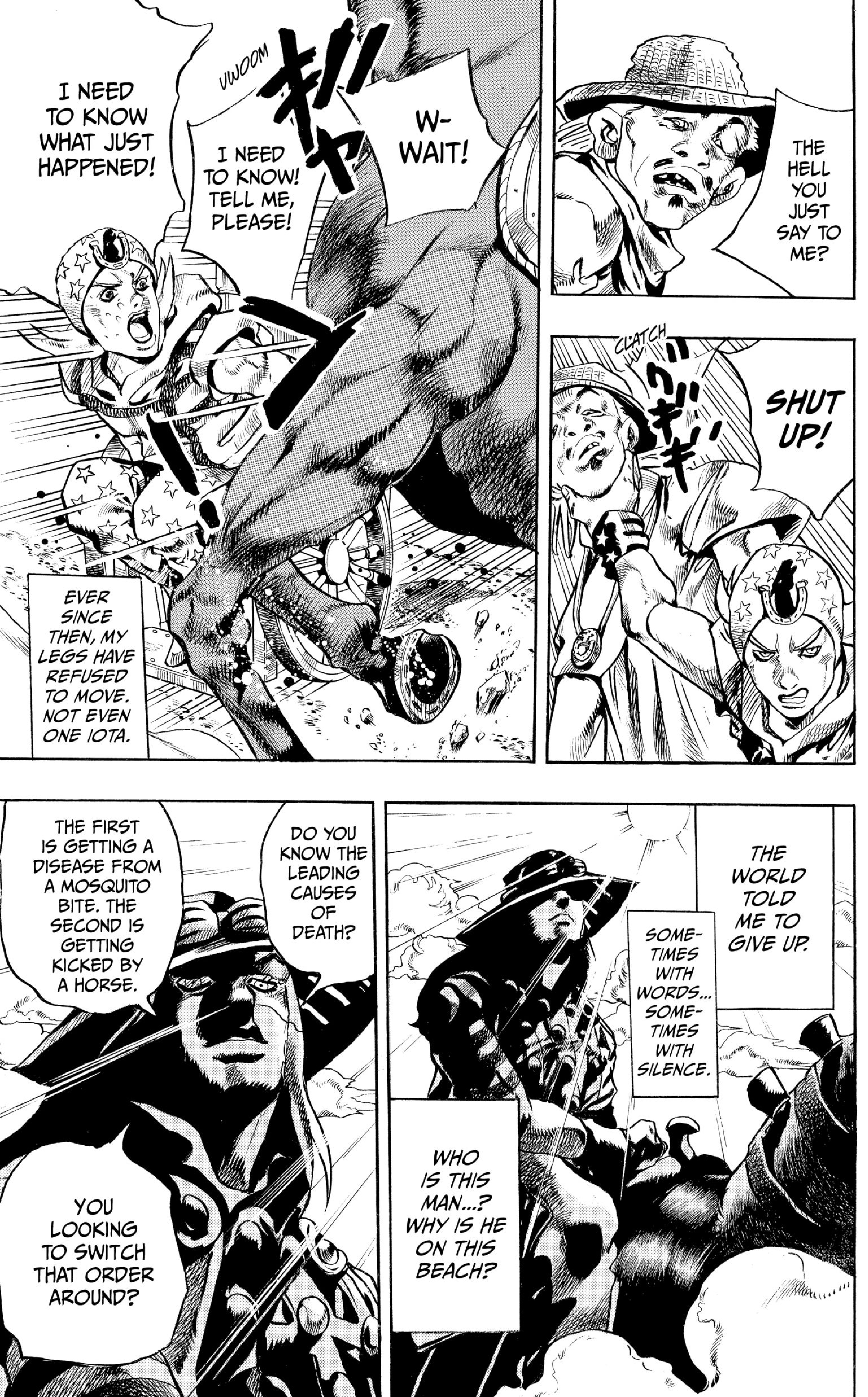
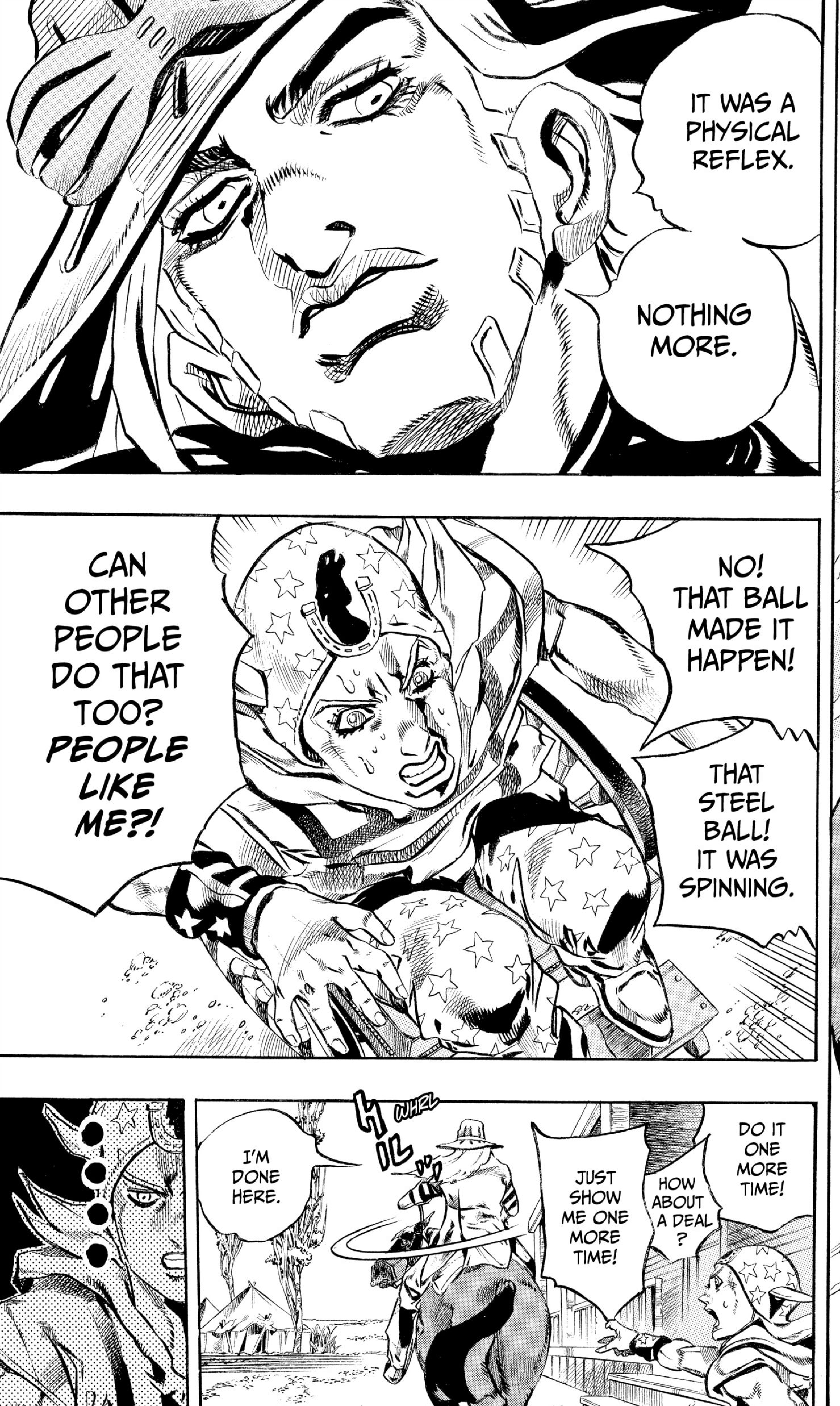
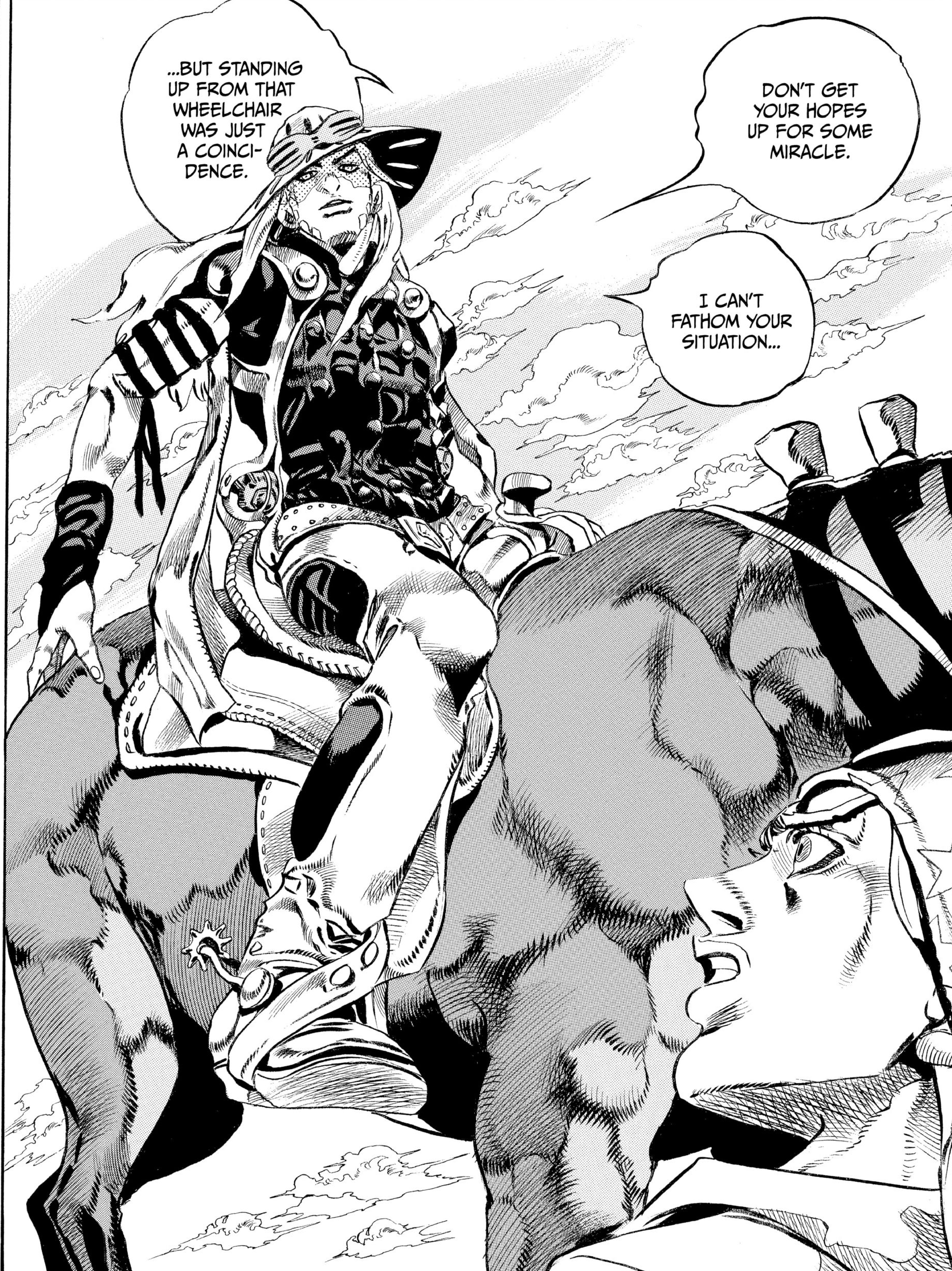
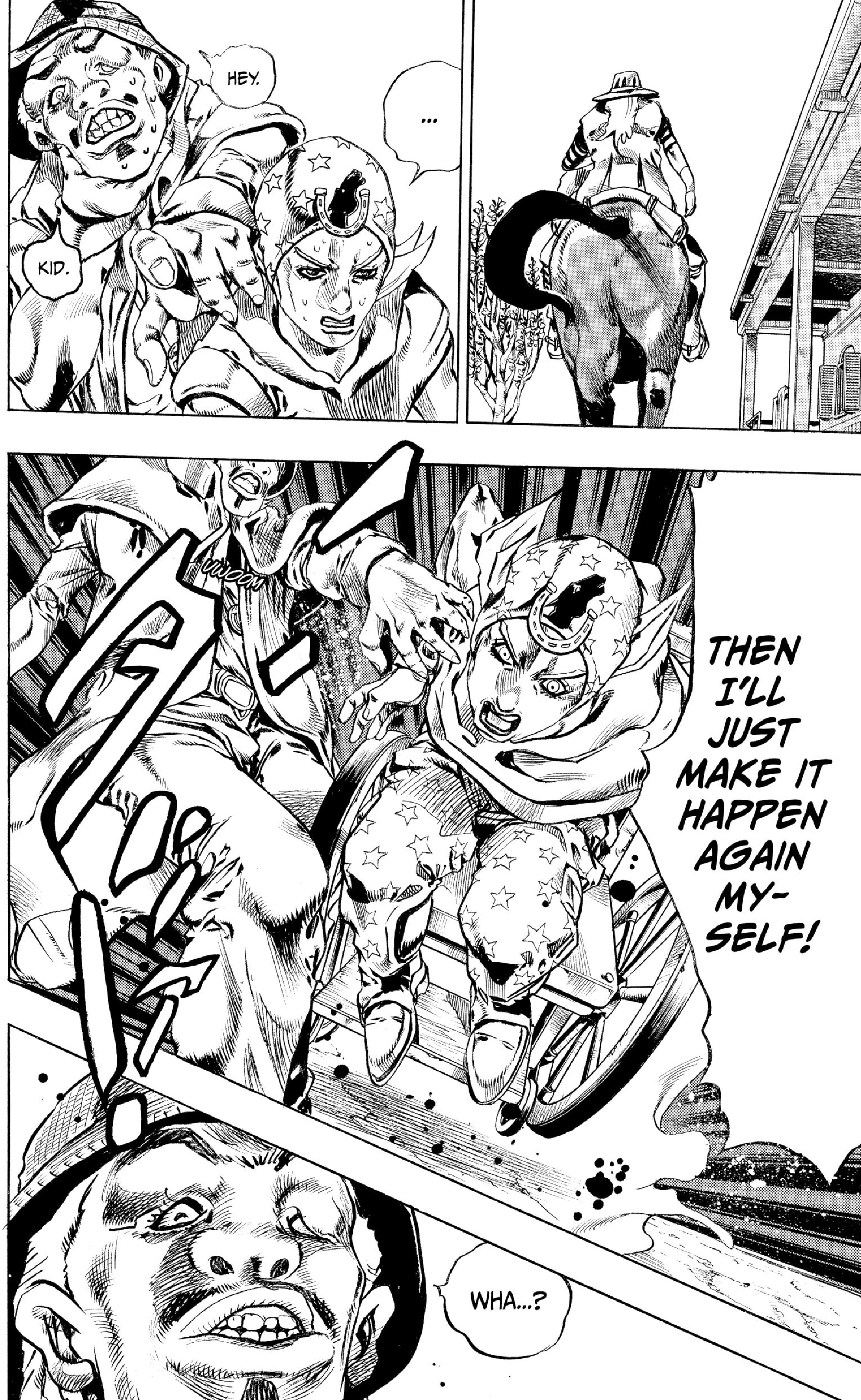

BA-DMP ドクン
BA-DMP ドクン
BA-DMP ドクン
BA-DMP ドクン
BA-DMP ドクン
WHAT WAS THAT ...?!
JUST NOW...
WHAT HAPPENED?! I DIDN'T IMAGINE THAT... I'M SURE OF IT.
BUT... THEY COULDN'T MOVE ANYMORE...
(DID THEY REALLY MOVE...?)
MY LEGS...
THAT **STEEL BALL**...
I TOUCHED THAT MAN'S STEEL BALL...
THMP
!!
GLANCE キョロ
GLANCE キョロ

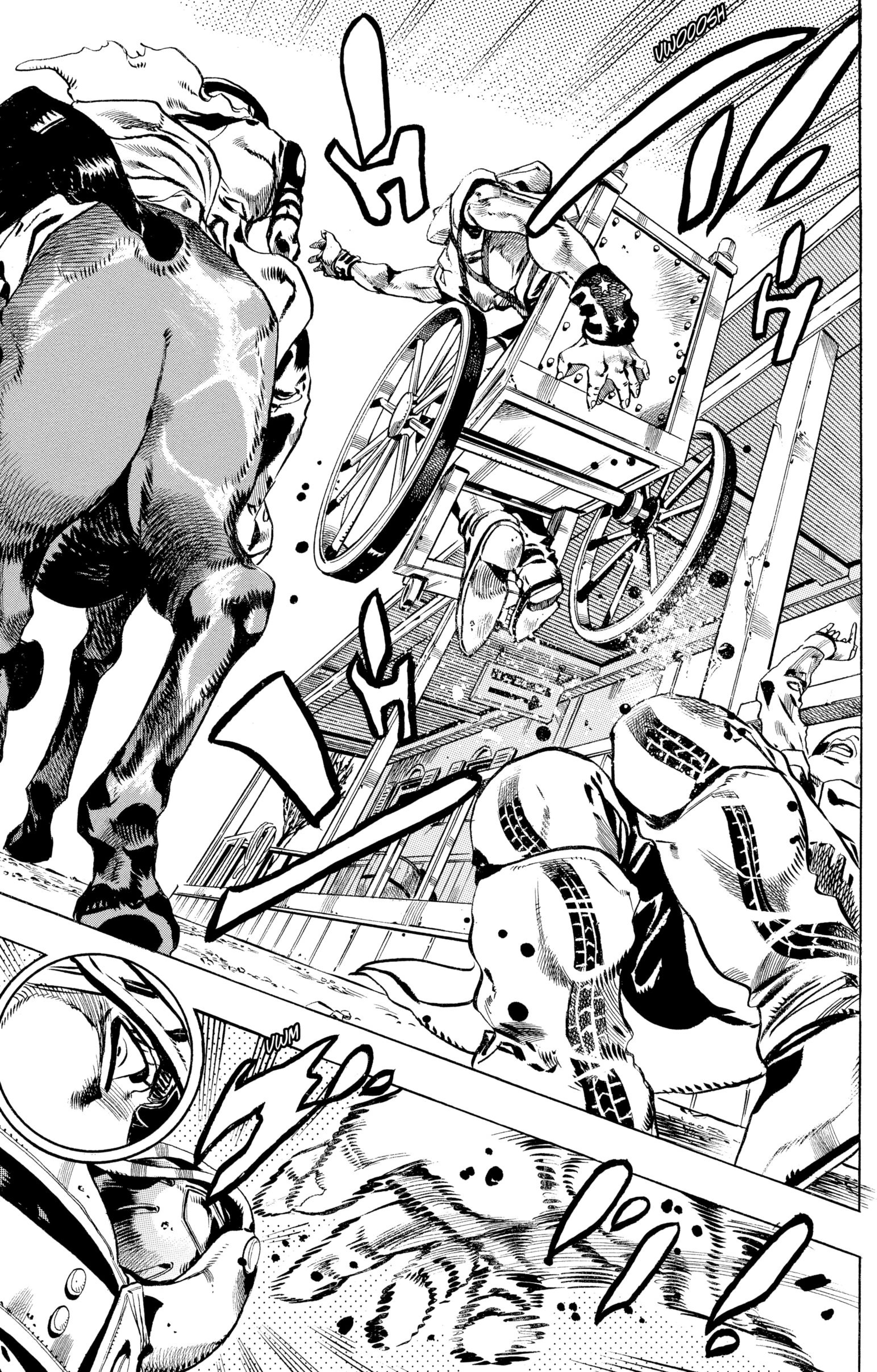

!!
HEY, YOU!
W... WAIT!
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU DID TO ME!
TWO YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THAT DAY.
WHERE WOULD I BE IF THAT HAD NEVER HAPPENED?
I DIDN'T EVEN WANT TO SEE THAT ACTRESS'S PLAY...
M-MOVE! YOU'RE IN MY WAY! DAMN IT!
LET ME THROUGH, YOU DAMN SLOW-POKES!


UWOOM
I NEED TO KNOW WHAT JUST HAPPENED!
I NEED TO KNOW! TELL ME, PLEASE!
W-WAIT!
EVER SINCE THEN, MY LEGS HAVE REFUSED TO MOVE. NOT EVEN ONE IOTA.
THE HELL YOU JUST SAY TO ME?
CLATCH
SHUT UP!
DO YOU KNOW THE LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH?
THE FIRST IS GETTING A DISEASE FROM A MOSQUITO BITE. THE SECOND IS GETTING KICKED BY A HORSE.
YOU LOOKING TO SWITCH THAT ORDER AROUND?
THE WORLD TOLD ME TO GIVE UP.
SOME-TIMES WITH WORDS... SOME-TIMES WITH SILENCE.
WHO IS THIS MAN...? WHY IS HE ON THIS BEACH?

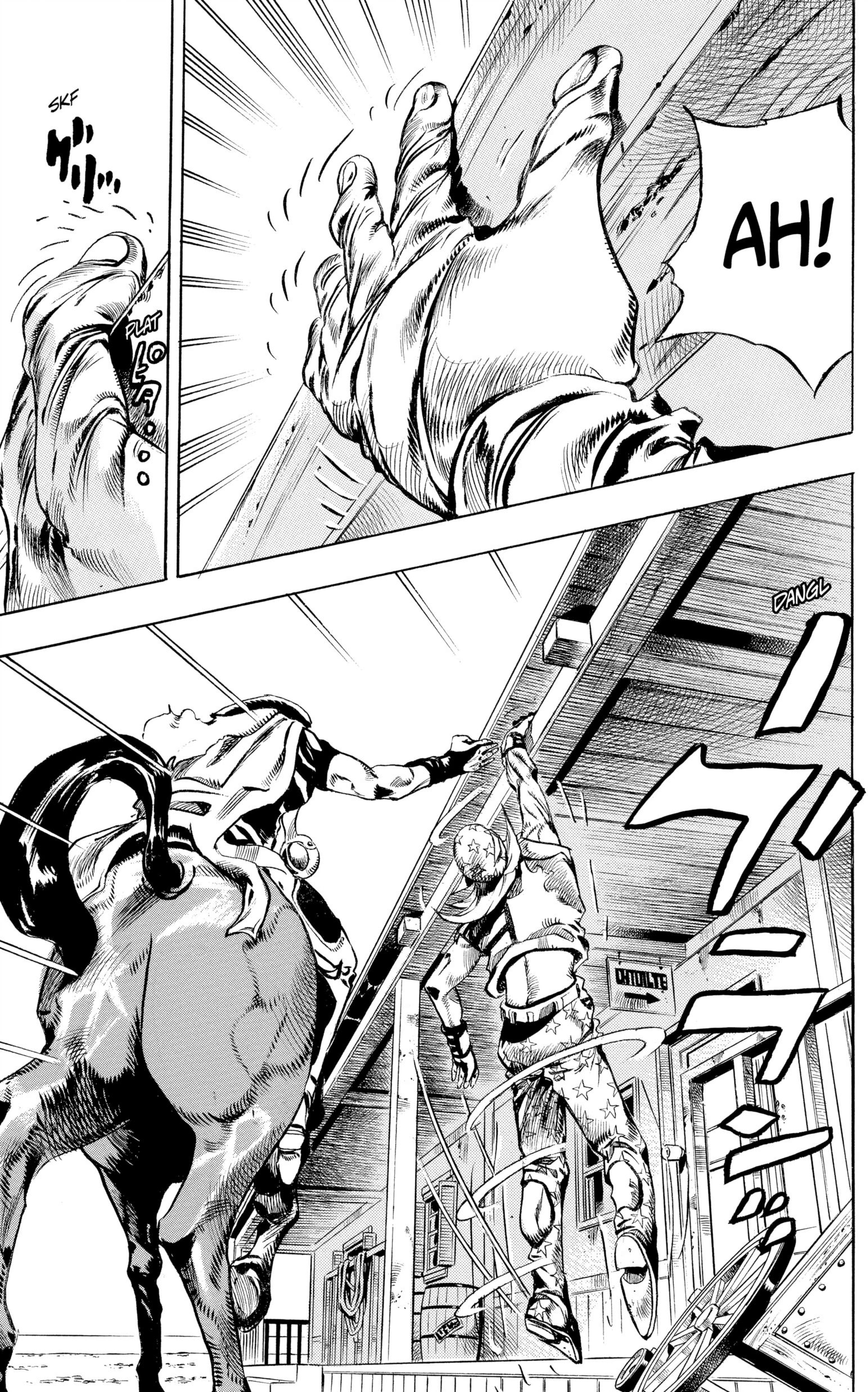

IT WAS A PHYSICAL REFLEX.
NOTHING MORE.
NO! THAT BALL MADE IT HAPPEN!
THAT STEEL BALL! IT WAS SPINNING.
CAN OTHER PEOPLE DO THAT TOO? *PEOPLE LIKE ME?!*
I'M DONE HERE.
WHRL
JUST SHOW ME ONE MORE TIME!
HOW ABOUT A DEAL?
DO IT ONE MORE TIME!

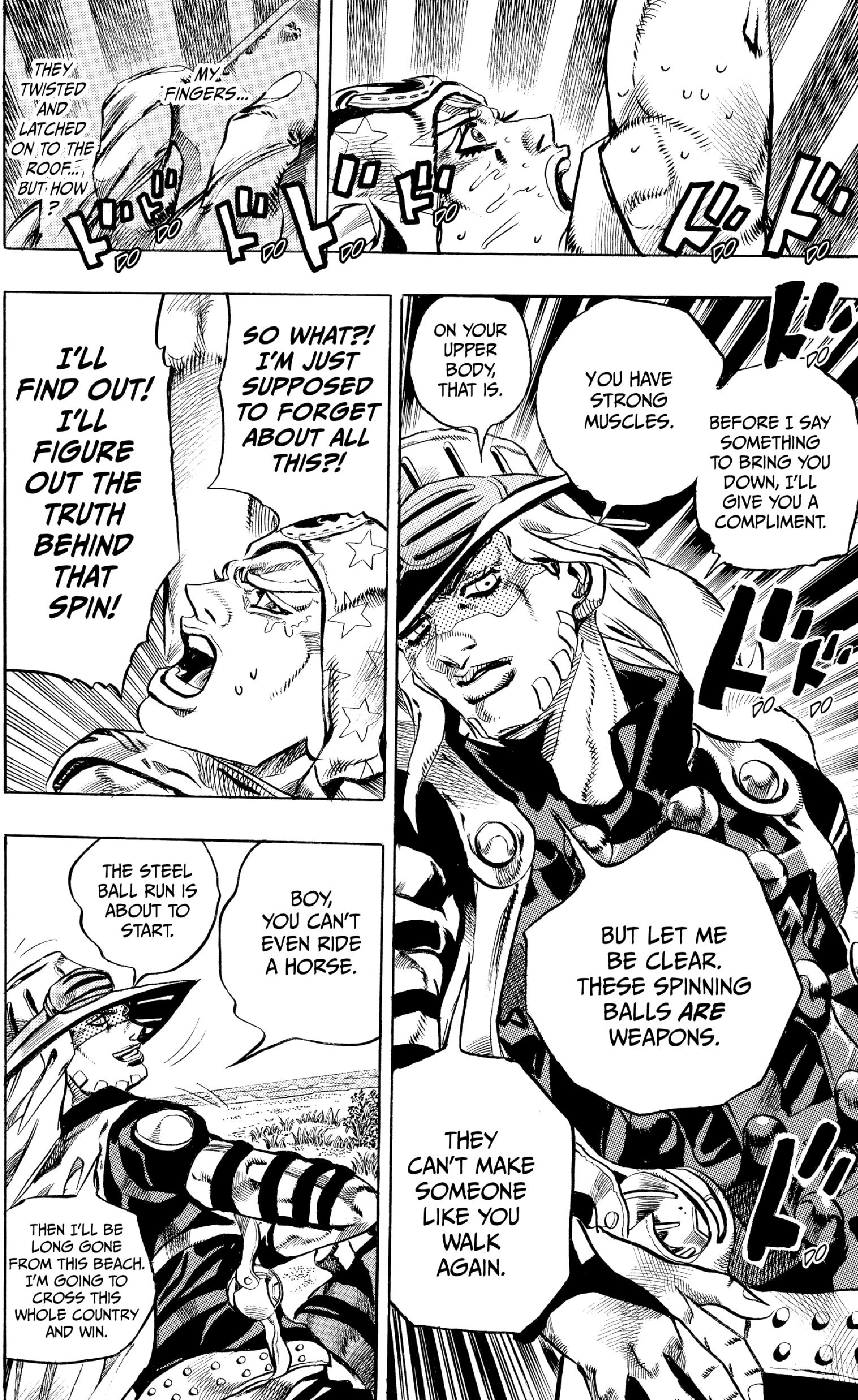

...BUT STANDING UP FROM THAT WHEELCHAIR WAS JUST A COINCIDENCE.
DON'T GET YOUR HOPES UP FOR SOME MIRACLE.
I CAN'T FATHOM YOUR SITUATION...

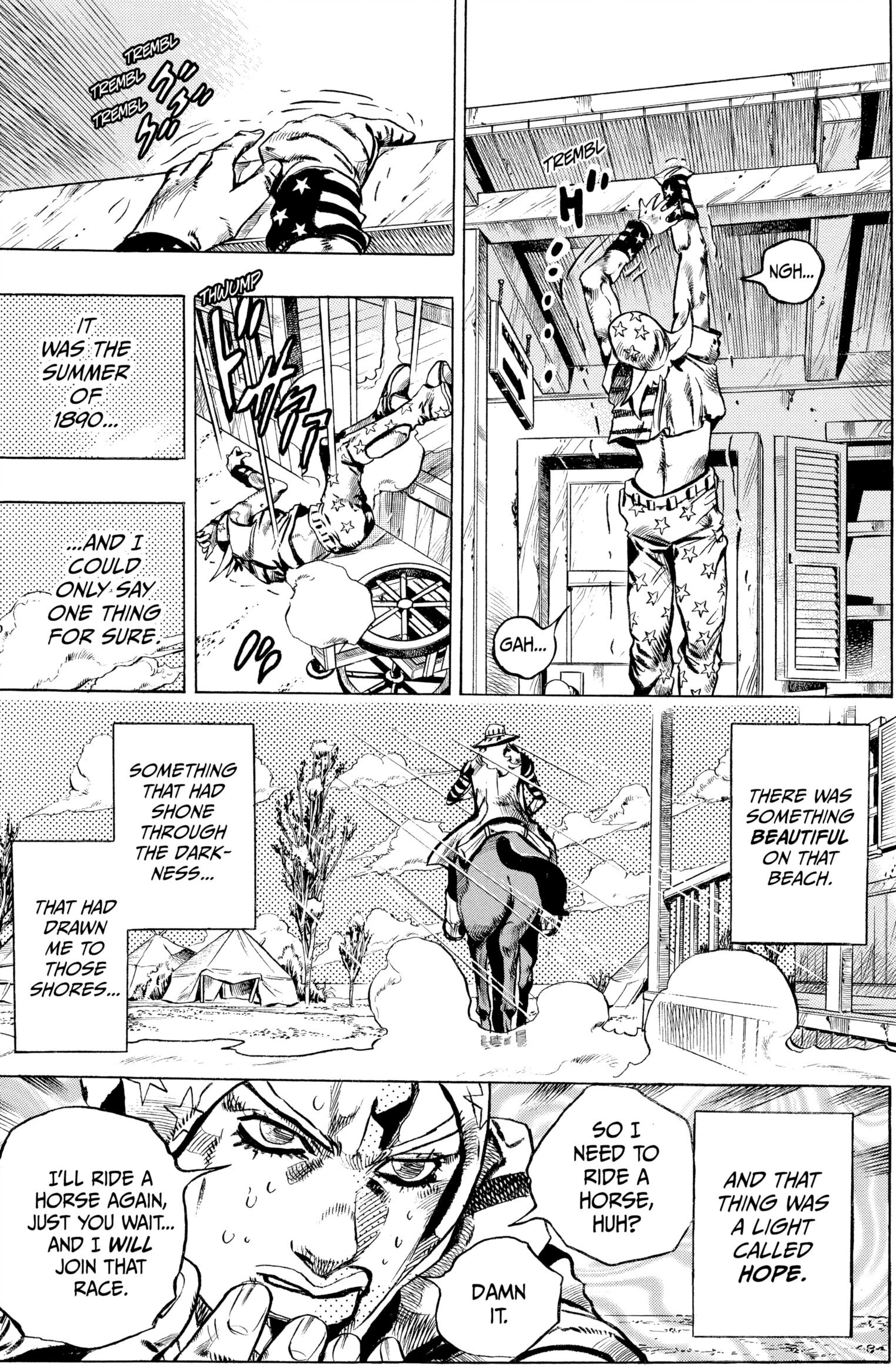

...
HEY.
KID.
VWOOM
THEN I'LL JUST MAKE IT HAPPEN AGAIN MYSELF!
WHA...?


VWOOOSH
VWM

ス゚
SHF
ギギギ
KRIK KRIK KRIK
ギギギ
KRIK KRIK KRIK
ドギュウウン
SKEWWWM
グギギギギ
KRIK KRIK KRIK KRIK KRIK KRIK

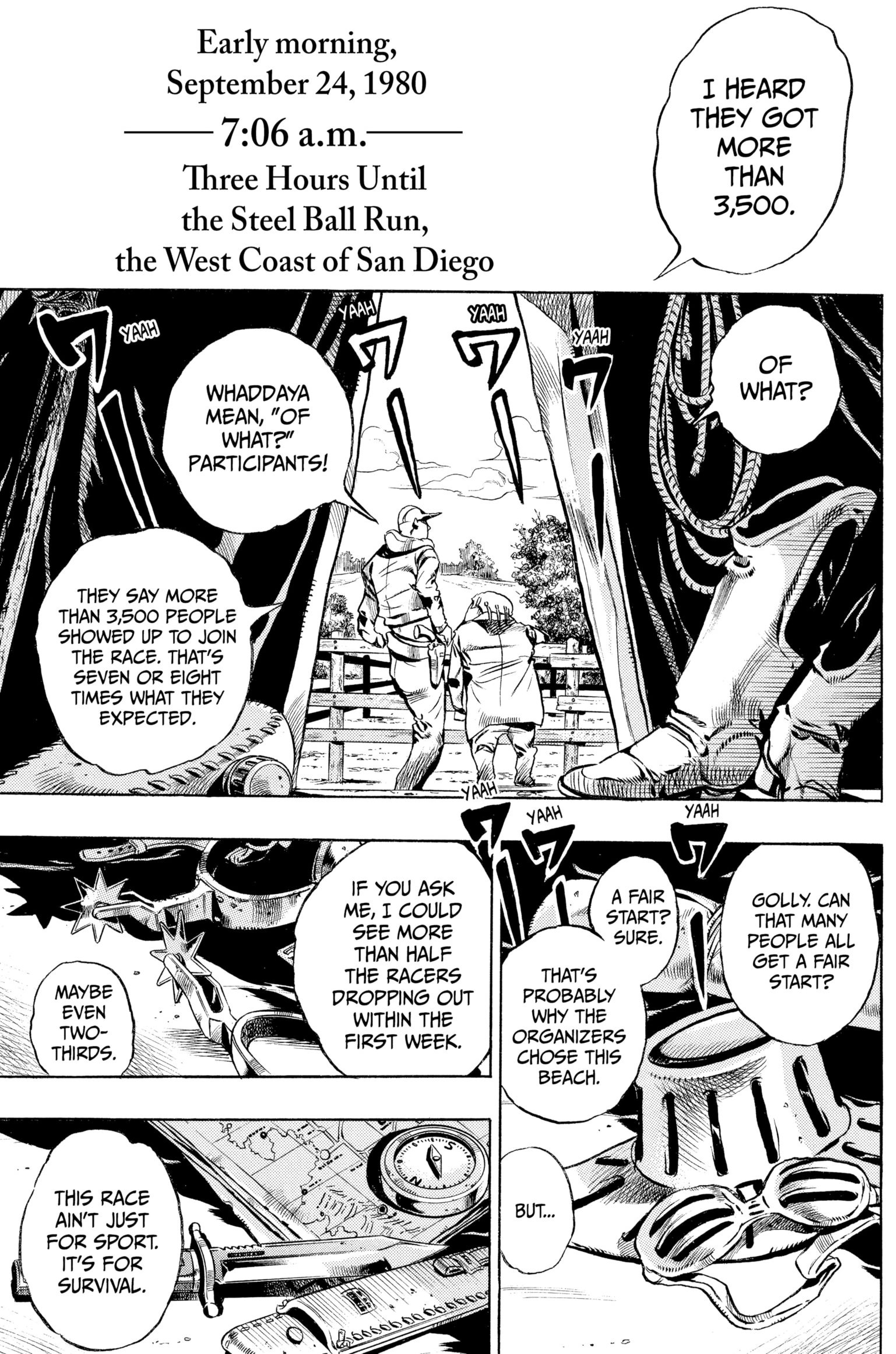

AH!
SKF
ヅリ…
PLAT
ペタ…
DANGL
ブラ〜〜ン

ドドドドド
DO DO DO DO DO
MY FINGERS...
THEY TWISTED AND LATCHED ON TO THE ROOF... BUT HOW?
ドドドドド
DO DO DO DO DO
ドド
DO
BEFORE I SAY SOMETHING TO BRING YOU DOWN, I'LL GIVE YOU A COMPLIMENT.
YOU HAVE STRONG MUSCLES.
ON YOUR UPPER BODY, THAT IS.
ドドド
DO DO
BUT LET ME BE CLEAR. THESE SPINNING BALLS *ARE* WEAPONS.
THEY CAN'T MAKE SOMEONE LIKE YOU WALK AGAIN.
ド
DO
SO WHAT?! I'M JUST SUPPOSED TO FORGET ABOUT ALL THIS?!
I'LL FIND OUT! I'LL FIGURE OUT THE TRUTH BEHIND THAT SPIN!
BOY, YOU CAN'T EVEN RIDE A HORSE.
THE STEEL BALL RUN IS ABOUT TO START.
THEN I'LL BE LONG GONE FROM THIS BEACH. I'M GOING TO CROSS THIS WHOLE COUNTRY AND WIN.


TREMBL
ム"
NGH...
GAH...
TREMBL TREMBL TREMBL
ラ"ラ"ラ"
THWUMP
ドサァ
IT WAS THE SUMMER OF 1890...
...AND I COULD ONLY SAY ONE THING FOR SURE.
THERE WAS SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL ON THAT BEACH.
SOMETHING THAT HAD SHONE THROUGH THE DARKNESS...
THAT HAD DRAWN ME TO THOSE SHORES...
AND THAT THING WAS A LIGHT CALLED HOPE.
SO I NEED TO RIDE A HORSE, HUH?
DAMN IT.
I'LL RIDE A HORSE AGAIN, JUST YOU WAIT... AND I WILL JOIN THAT RACE.

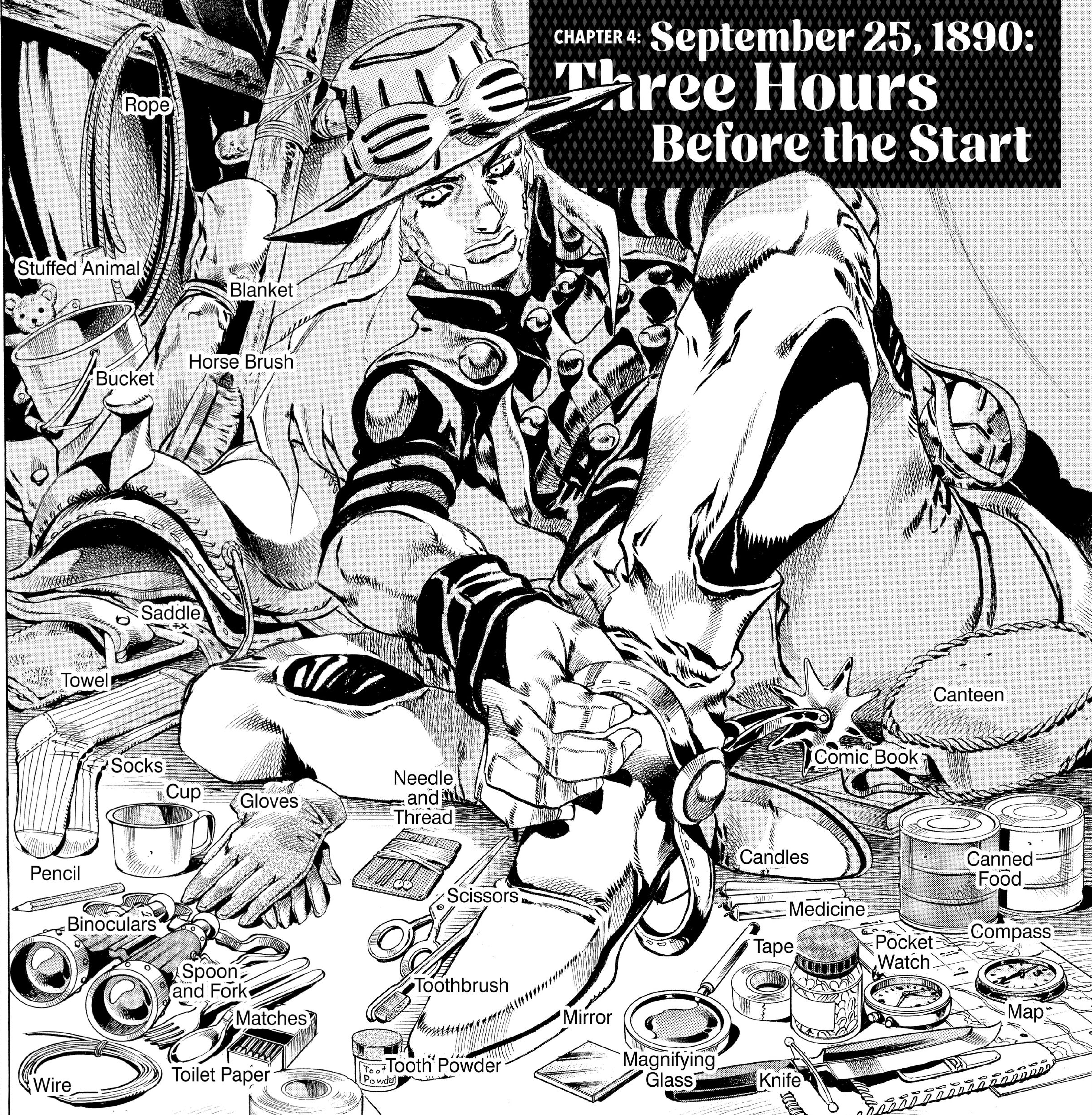
CHAPTER 4: September 25, 1890: Three Hours Before the Start

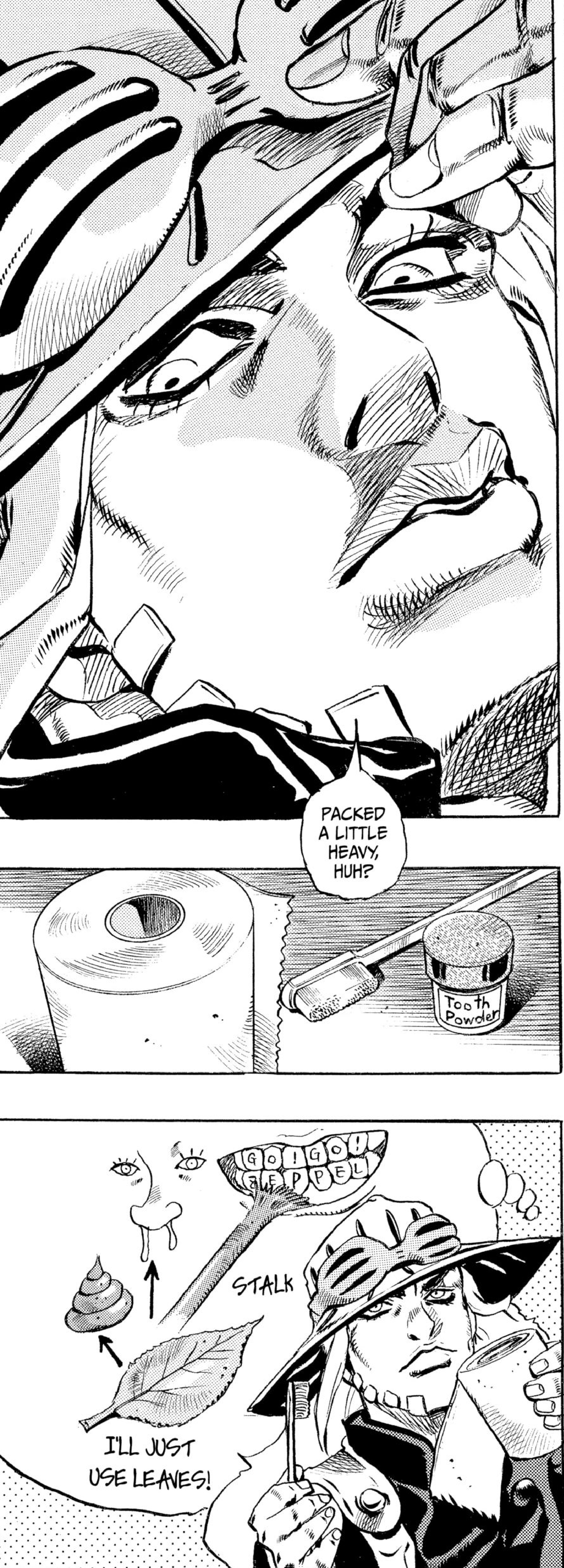
Early morning,
September 24, 1980
——— 7:06 a.m. ———
Three Hours Until
the Steel Ball Run,
the West Coast of San Diego

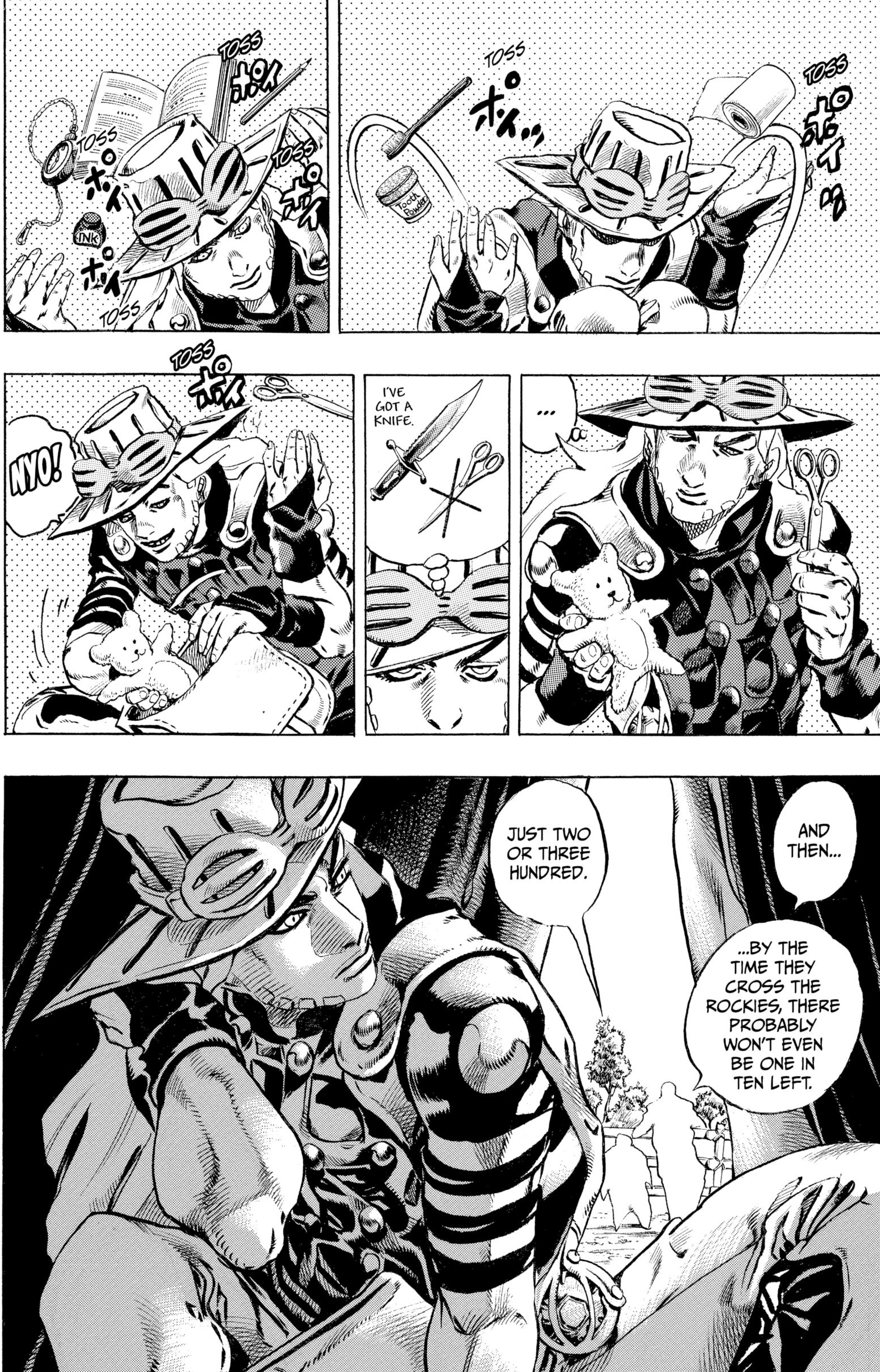

I HEARD THEY GOT MORE THAN 3,500.
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
OF WHAT?
WHADDAYA MEAN, "OF WHAT?" PARTICIPANTS!
THEY SAY MORE THAN 3,500 PEOPLE SHOWED UP TO JOIN THE RACE. THAT'S SEVEN OR EIGHT TIMES WHAT THEY EXPECTED.
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
GOLLY. CAN THAT MANY PEOPLE ALL GET A FAIR START?
A FAIR START? SURE.
THAT'S PROBABLY WHY THE ORGANIZERS CHOSE THIS BEACH.
BUT...
IF YOU ASK ME, I COULD SEE MORE THAN HALF THE RACERS DROPPING OUT WITHIN THE FIRST WEEK.
MAYBE EVEN TWO-THIRDS.
THIS RACE AIN'T JUST FOR SPORT. IT'S FOR SURVIVAL.
S
N

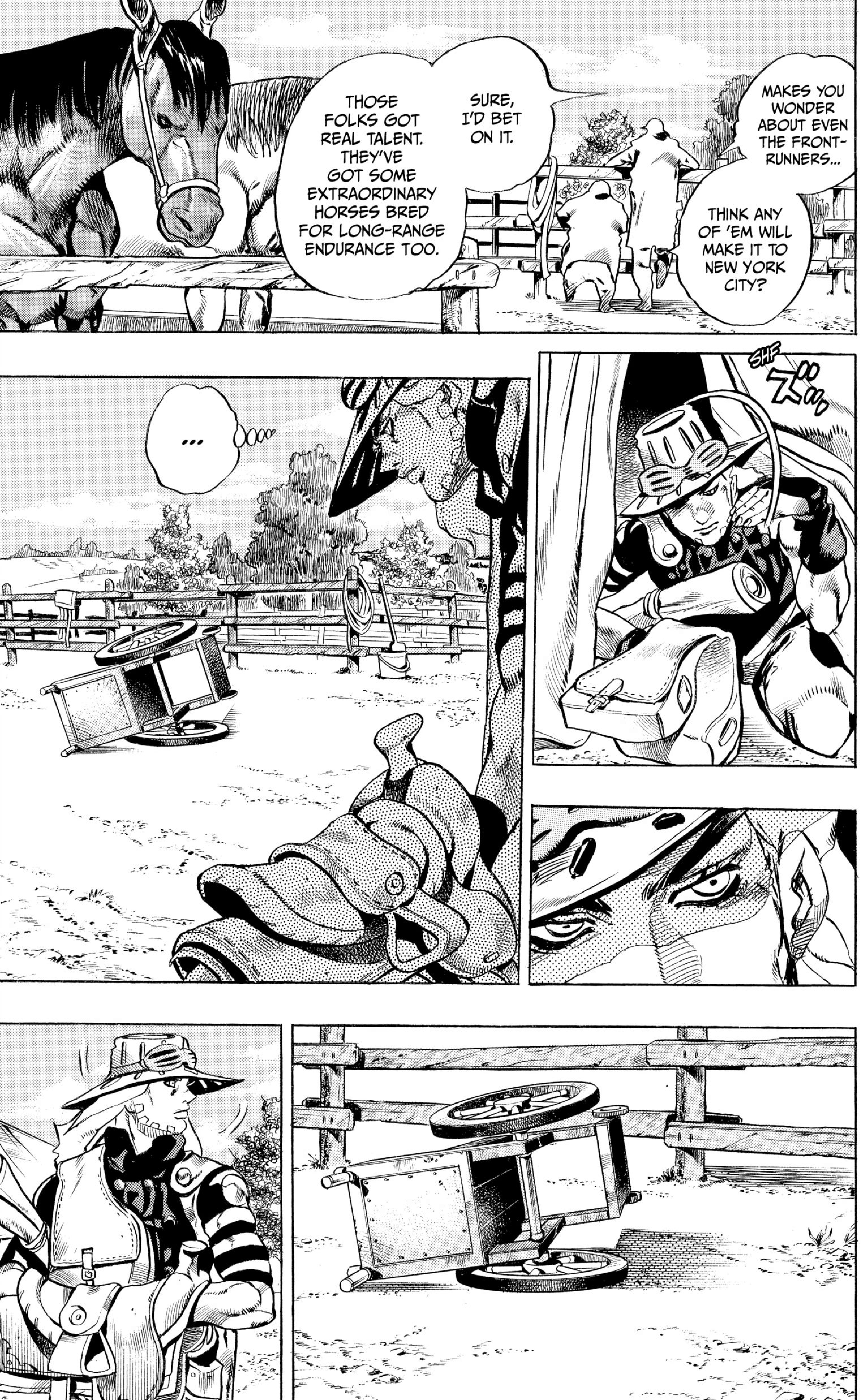
CHAPTER 4: September 25, 1890:

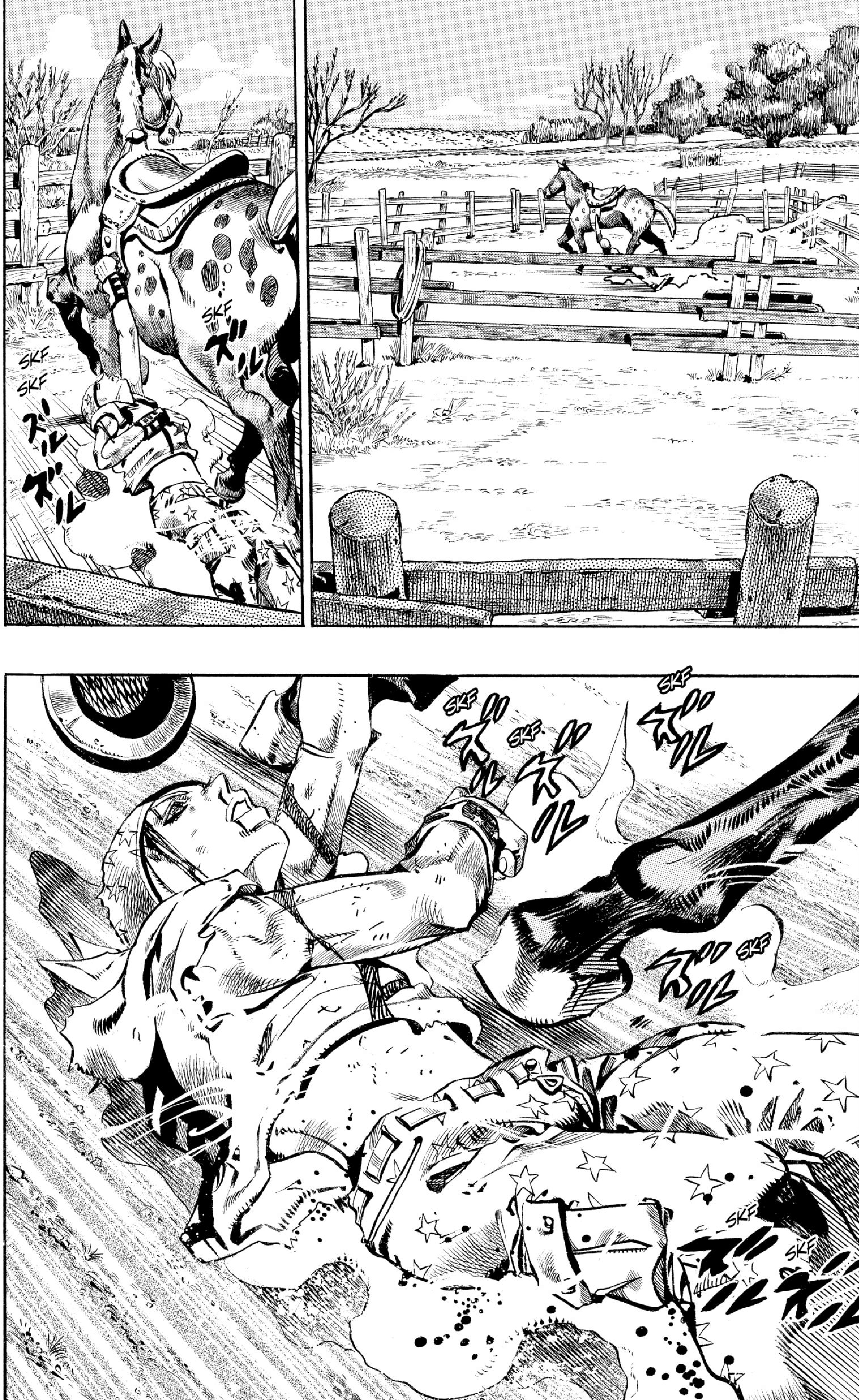
Three Hours Before the Start


Canteen
Comic Book
Canned Food
Compass
Map
Pocket Watch
Medicine
Candles
Tape
Knife
Magnifying Glass
Mirror
Needle and Thread
Scissors
Toothbrush
Tooth Powder
Toot Powder
Rope
Blanket
Horse Brush
Stuffed Animal
Bucket
Saddle
Towel
Socks
Cup
Gloves
Pencil
Binoculars
Spoon and Fork
Matches
Toilet Paper
Wire


PACKED A LITTLE HEAVY, HUH?
Tooth Powder
GO! GO! ZEPPELI
STALK
I'LL JUST USE LEAVES!


TOSS
ポイッ
TOSS
ポイッ
Tooth Powder
TOSS
ポイ
TOSS
ポイ
TOSS
ポイ
INK
TOSS
ポイ
TOSS
...
I'VE GOT A KNIFE.
TOSS
ポイ
NYO!
JUST TWO OR THREE HUNDRED.
AND THEN...
...BY THE TIME THEY CROSS THE ROCKIES, THERE PROBABLY WON'T EVEN BE ONE IN TEN LEFT.


MAKES YOU WONDER ABOUT EVEN THE FRONT-RUNNERS...
THINK ANY OF 'EM WILL MAKE IT TO NEW YORK CITY?
SURE, I'D BET ON IT.
THOSE FOLKS GOT REAL TALENT. THEY'VE GOT SOME EXTRAORDINARY HORSES BRED FOR LONG-RANGE ENDURANCE TOO.
SHF
ズッ
...


SKF
ズル
SKF
SKF
ズル
ズル
SKF
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SKF
ズル
SKF
ズル
SKF
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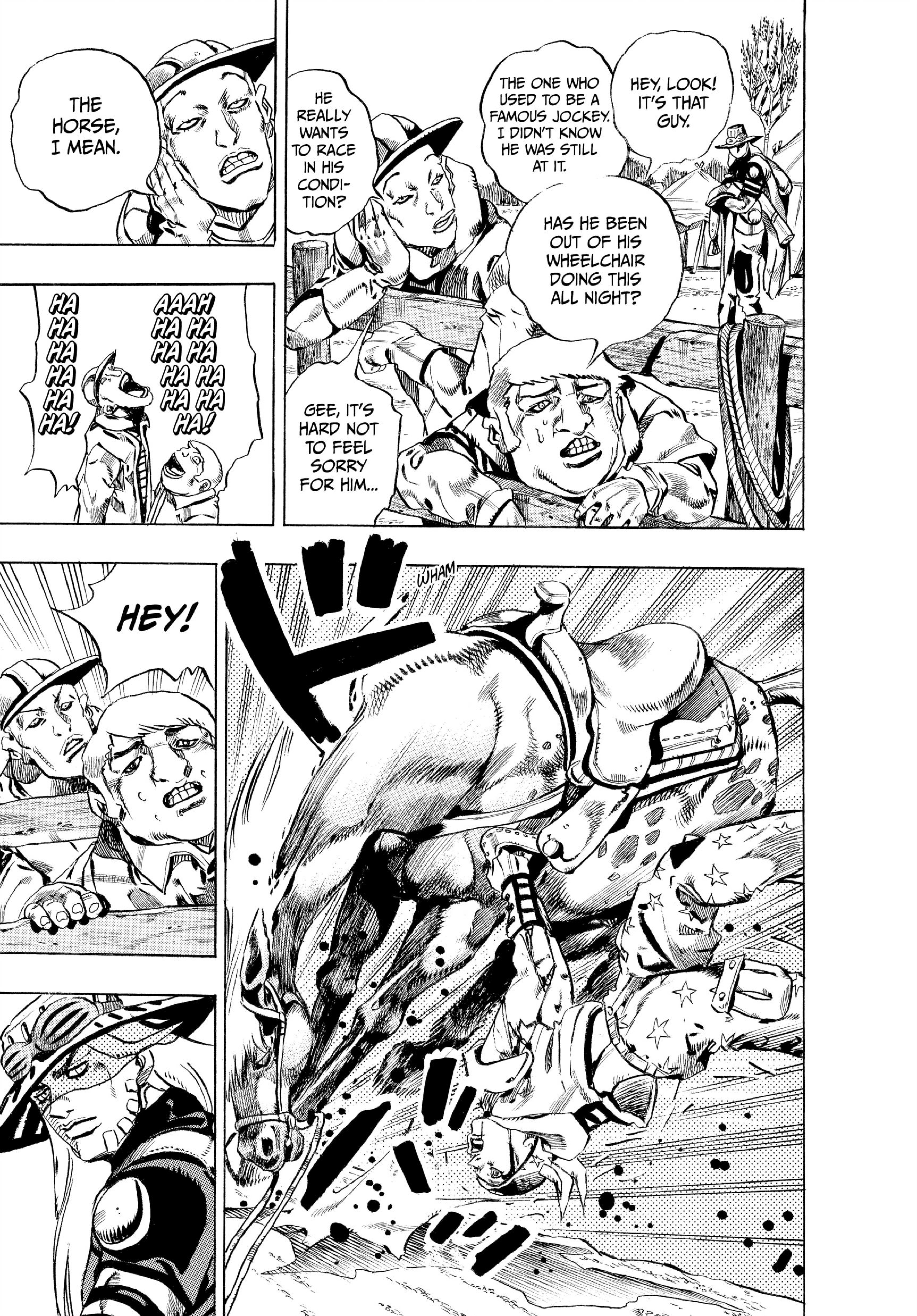
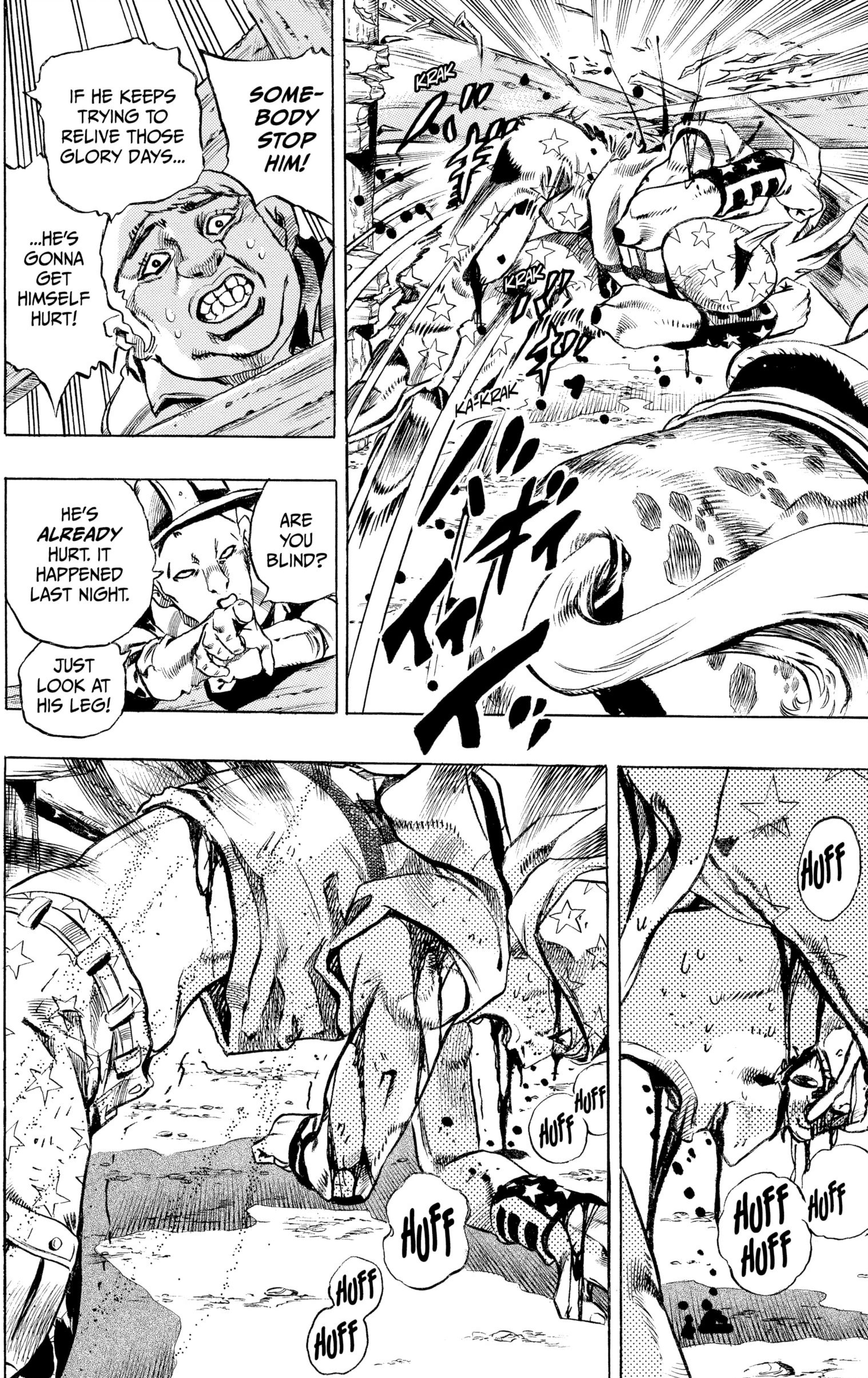
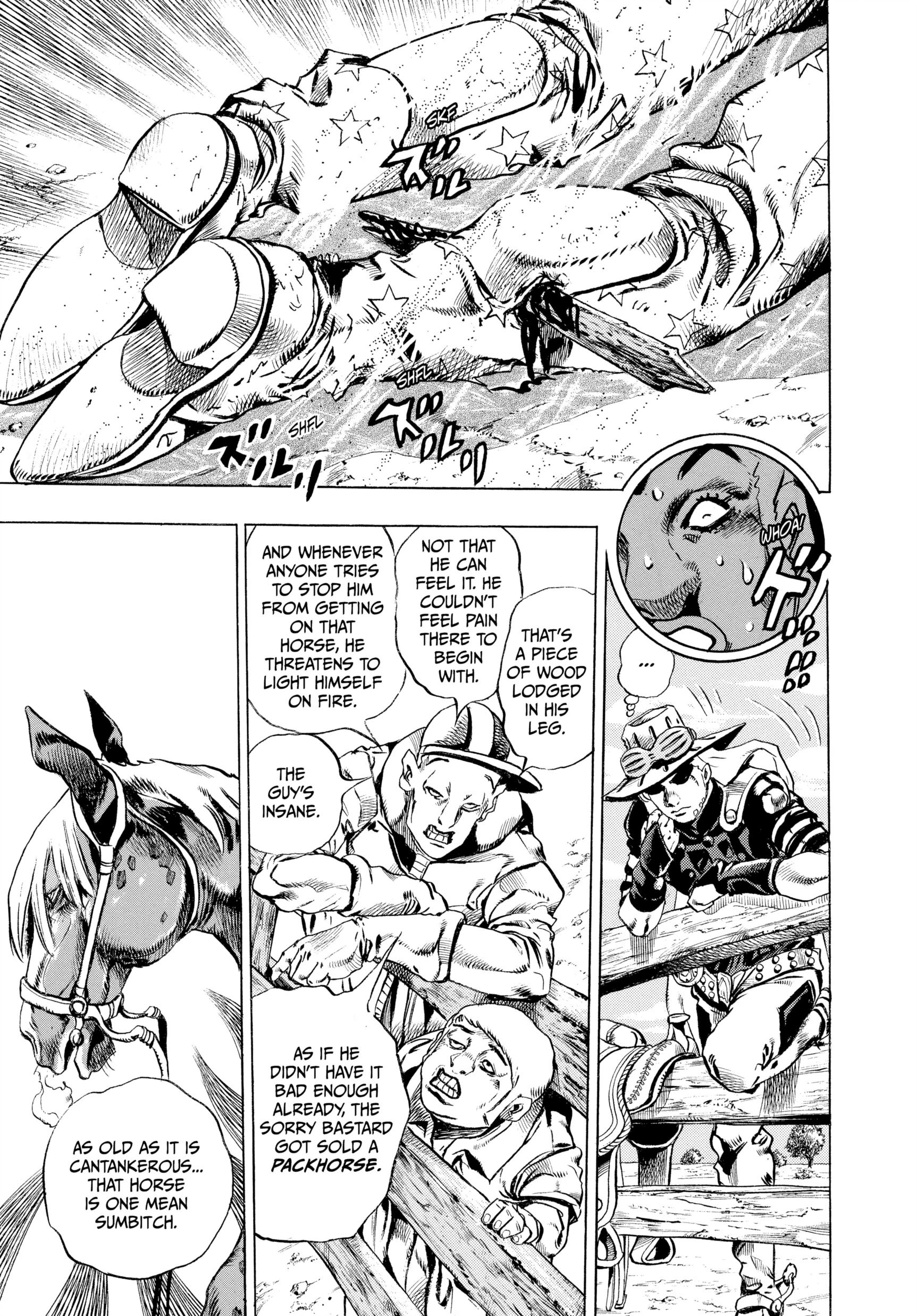
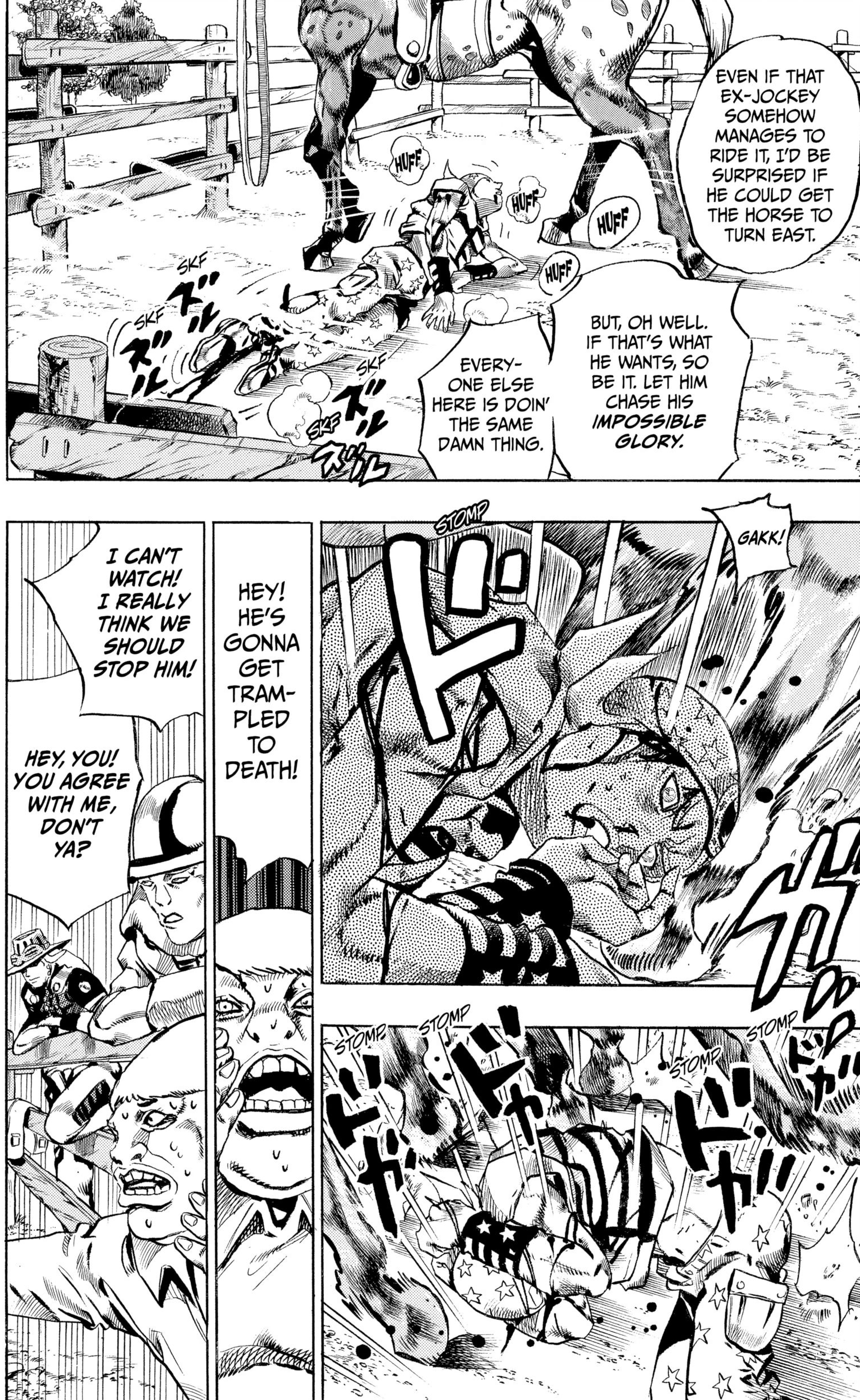
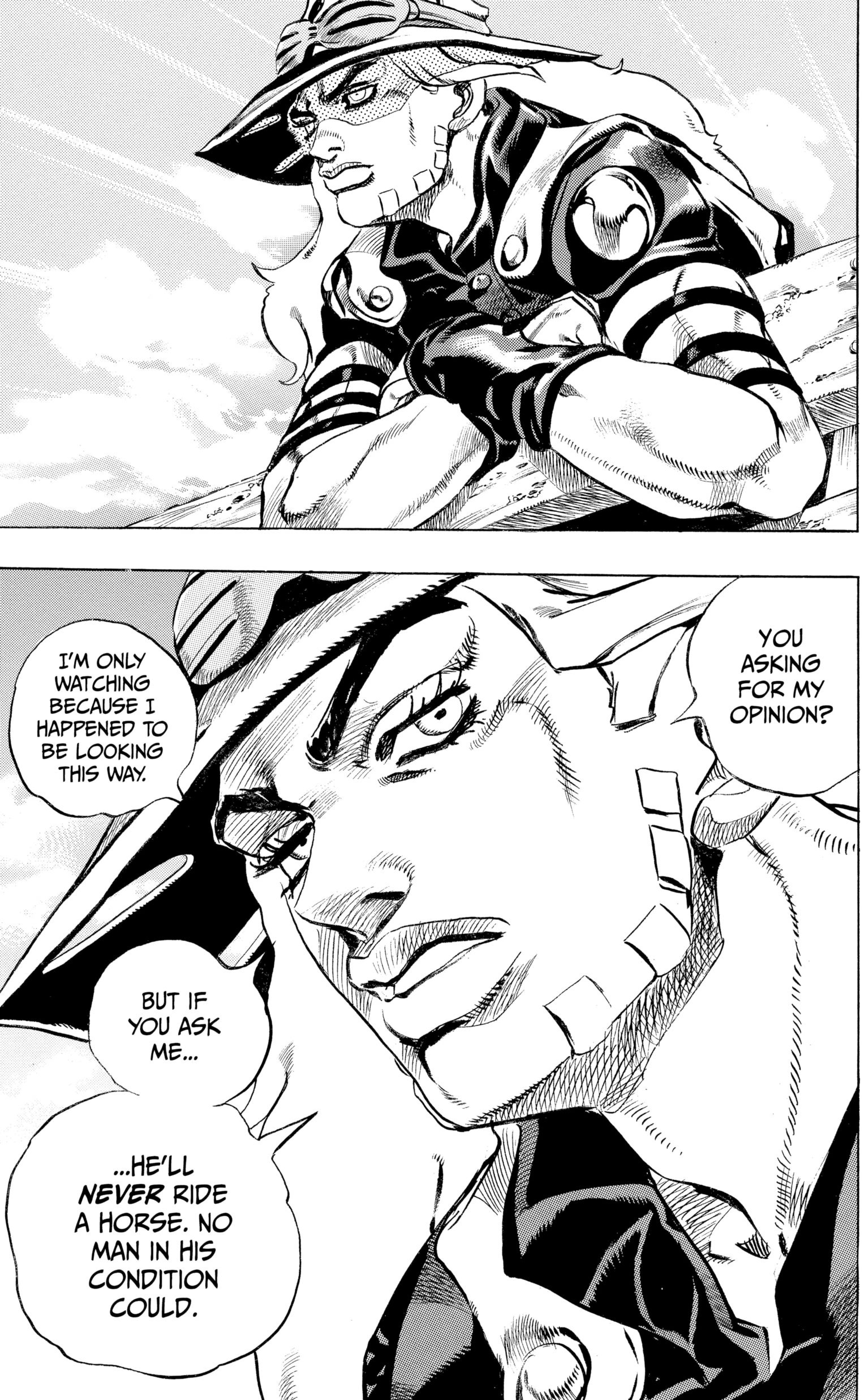
SKF
SKF
ズル

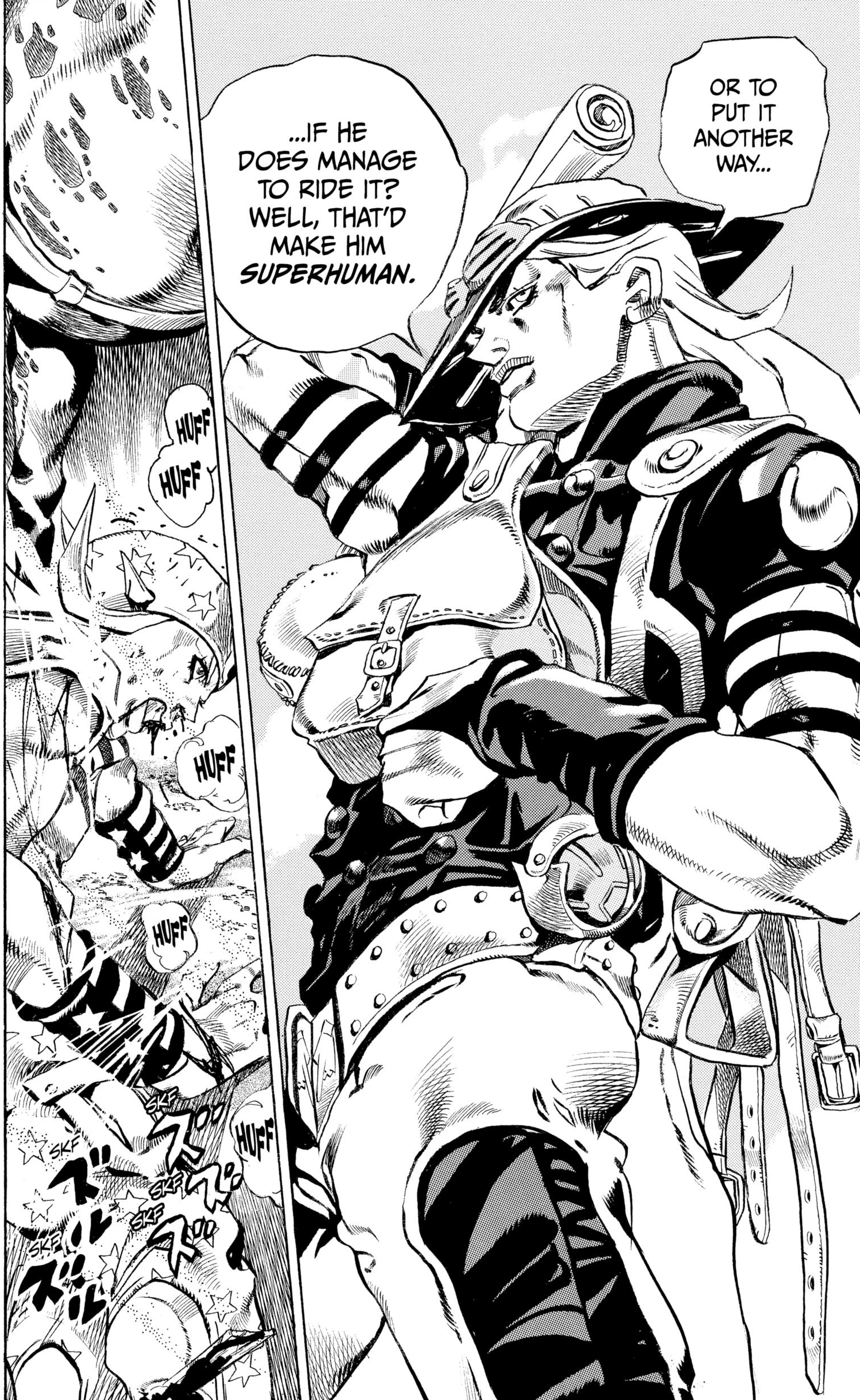

HEY, LOOK! IT'S THAT GUY.
THE ONE WHO USED TO BE A FAMOUS JOCKEY. I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS STILL AT IT.
HE REALLY WANTS TO RACE IN HIS CONDITION?
HAS HE BEEN OUT OF HIS WHEELCHAIR DOING THIS ALL NIGHT?
GEE, IT'S HARD NOT TO FEEL SORRY FOR HIM...
THE HORSE, I MEAN.
AAAH HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!
HA HA HA HA HA HA!
WHAM
HEY!

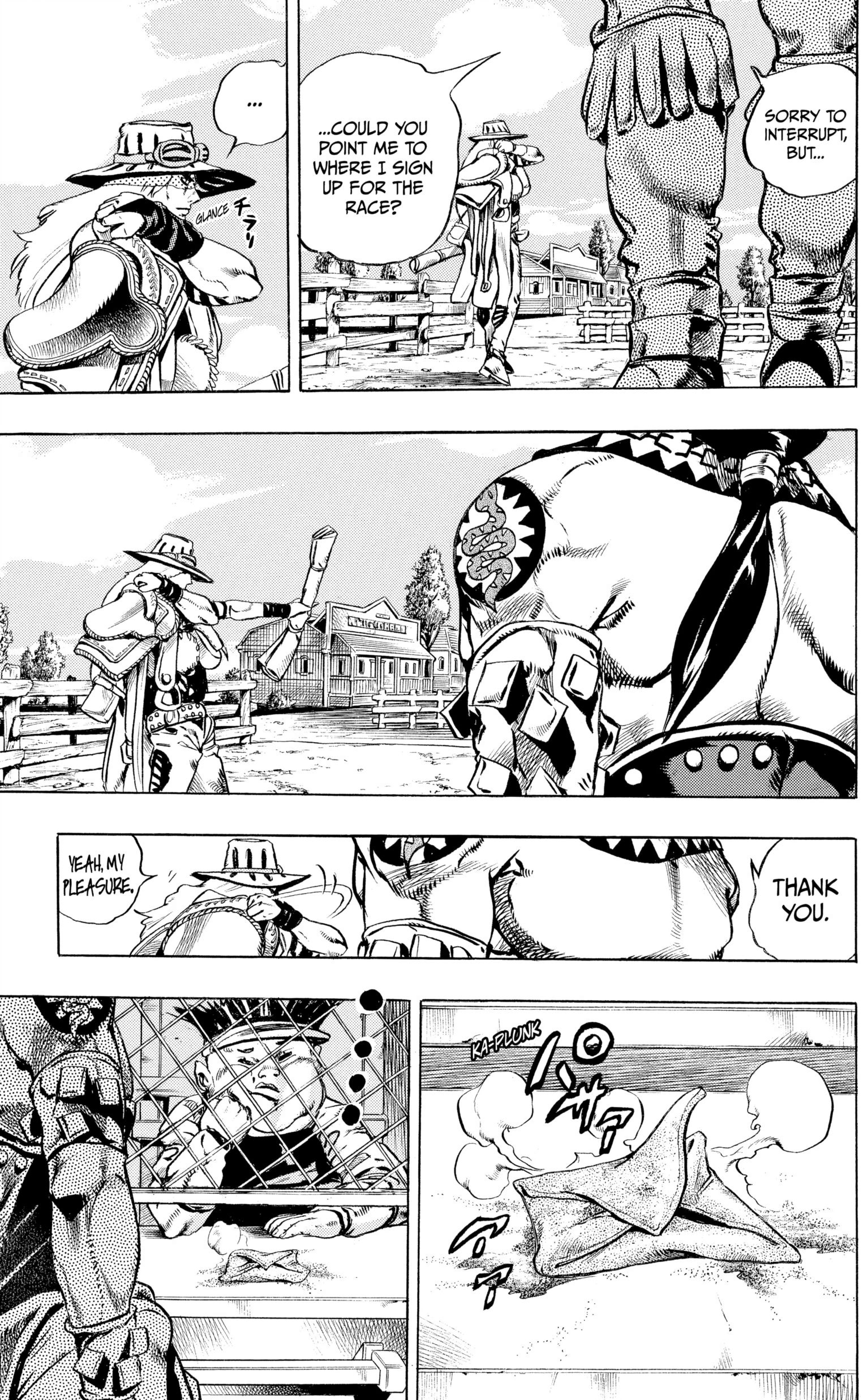

KRAK
KRAK
KA-KRAK
SOME-BODY STOP HIM!
IF HE KEEPS TRYING TO RELIVE THOSE GLORY DAYS...
...HE'S GONNA GET HIMSELF HURT!
ARE YOU BLIND?
HE'S *ALREADY* HURT. IT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT.
JUST LOOK AT HIS LEG!
HUFF
HUFF HUFF
HUFF
HUFF HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF HUFF

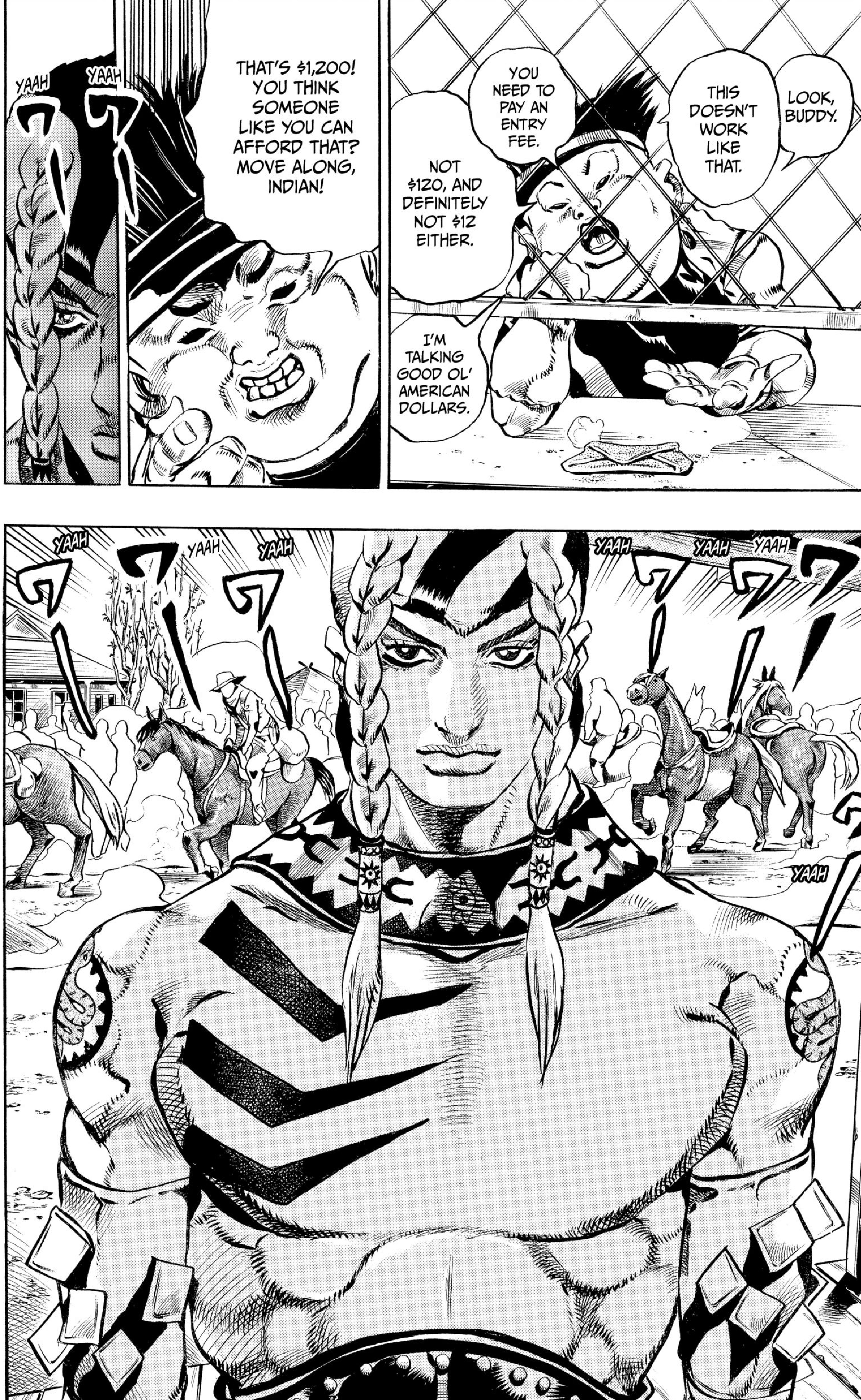

SKF
SHFL
SHFL
WHOA!
...
THAT'S A PIECE OF WOOD LODGED IN HIS LEG.
NOT THAT HE CAN FEEL IT. HE COULDN'T FEEL PAIN THERE TO BEGIN WITH.
AND WHENEVER ANYONE TRIES TO STOP HIM FROM GETTING ON THAT HORSE, HE THREATENS TO LIGHT HIMSELF ON FIRE.
THE GUY'S INSANE.
AS IF HE DIDN'T HAVE IT BAD ENOUGH ALREADY, THE SORRY BASTARD GOT SOLD A *PACKHORSE.*
AS OLD AS IT IS CANTANKEROUS... THAT HORSE IS ONE MEAN SUMBITCH.

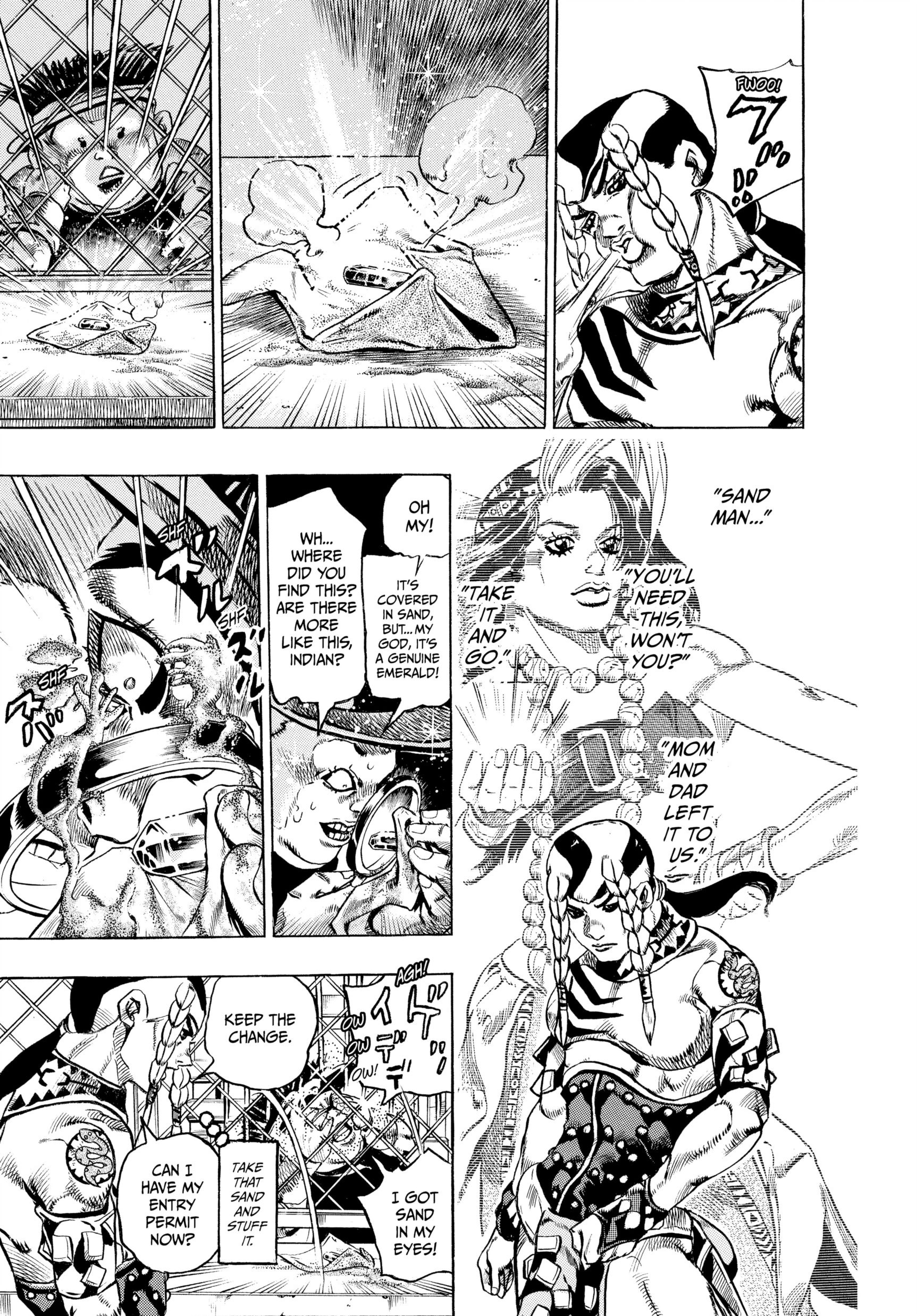

EVEN IF THAT EX-JOCKEY SOMEHOW MANAGES TO RIDE IT, I'D BE SURPRISED IF HE COULD GET THE HORSE TO TURN EAST.
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
BUT, OH WELL. IF THAT'S WHAT HE WANTS, SO BE IT. LET HIM CHASE HIS *IMPOSSIBLE GLORY.*
EVERY-ONE ELSE HERE IS DOIN' THE SAME DAMN THING.
SKF ズル
SKF ズル
SKF ズル
SKF ズル
GAKK!
STOMP ド
ドドド
HEY! HE'S GONNA GET TRAMPLED TO DEATH!
I CAN'T WATCH! I REALLY THINK WE SHOULD STOP HIM!
HEY, YOU! YOU AGREE WITH ME, DON'T YA?
STOMP ドガ
STOMP ドガ
STOMP ドガ
STOMP ドガ
STOMP ドガ

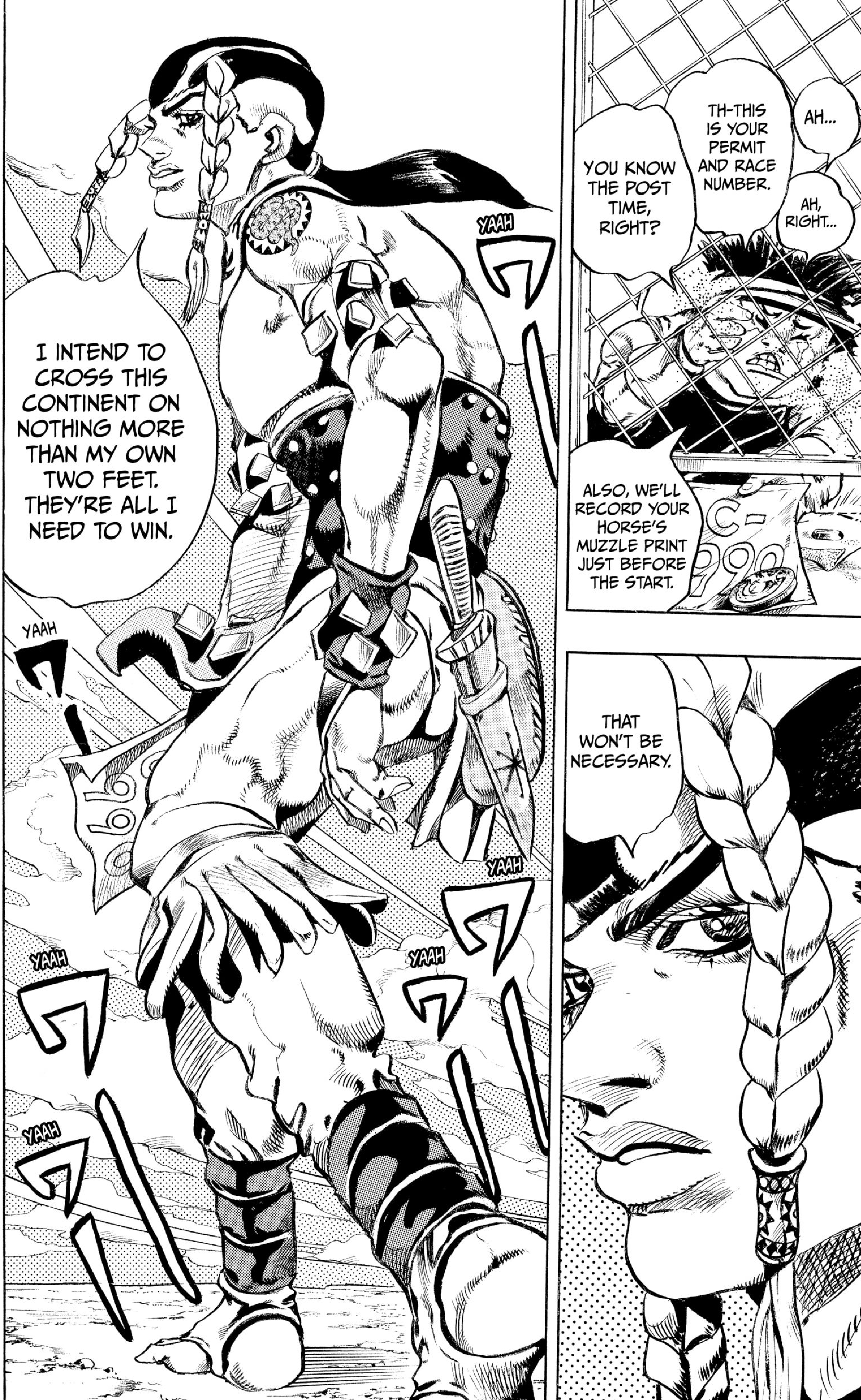

YOU ASKING FOR MY OPINION?
I'M ONLY WATCHING BECAUSE I HAPPENED TO BE LOOKING THIS WAY.
BUT IF YOU ASK ME...
...HE'LL ***NEVER*** RIDE A HORSE. NO MAN IN HIS CONDITION COULD.


OR TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY...
...IF HE DOES MANAGE TO RIDE IT? WELL, THAT'D MAKE HIM *SUPERHUMAN.*
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
SKF
SKF
SKF
SKF
SKF


SORRY TO INTERRUPT, BUT...
...COULD YOU POINT ME TO WHERE I SIGN UP FOR THE RACE?
...
GLANCE
チラリ
THANK YOU.
YEAH, MY PLEASURE.
KA-PLUNK
パサァ
・・・・


LOOK, BUDDY.
THIS DOESN'T WORK LIKE THAT.
YOU NEED TO PAY AN ENTRY FEE.
NOT $120, AND DEFINITELY NOT $12 EITHER.
I'M TALKING GOOD OL' AMERICAN DOLLARS.
THAT'S $1,200! YOU THINK SOMEONE LIKE YOU CAN AFFORD THAT? MOVE ALONG, INDIAN!
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH


FWOO!
"SAND MAN..."
"YOU'LL NEED THIS, WON'T YOU?"
"TAKE IT AND GO."
"MOM AND DAD LEFT IT TO US."
OH MY!
IT'S COVERED IN SAND, BUT... MY GOD, IT'S A GENUINE EMERALD!
WH... WHERE DID YOU FIND THIS? ARE THERE MORE LIKE THIS, INDIAN?
SHF
SHF
SHF
KEEP THE CHANGE.
AGH!
OW
OW
OW!
I GOT SAND IN MY EYES!
TAKE THAT SAND AND STUFF IT.
CAN I HAVE MY ENTRY PERMIT NOW?


AH...
TH-THIS IS YOUR PERMIT AND RACE NUMBER.
YOU KNOW THE POST TIME, RIGHT?
AH, RIGHT...
ALSO, WE'LL RECORD YOUR HORSE'S MUZZLE PRINT JUST BEFORE THE START.
C-990
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY.
YAAH
I INTEND TO CROSS THIS CONTINENT ON NOTHING MORE THAN MY OWN TWO FEET. THEY'RE ALL I NEED TO WIN.
YAAH
990
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH

BOOM
ドン
BOOM
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BOOM
ドッ
BOOM
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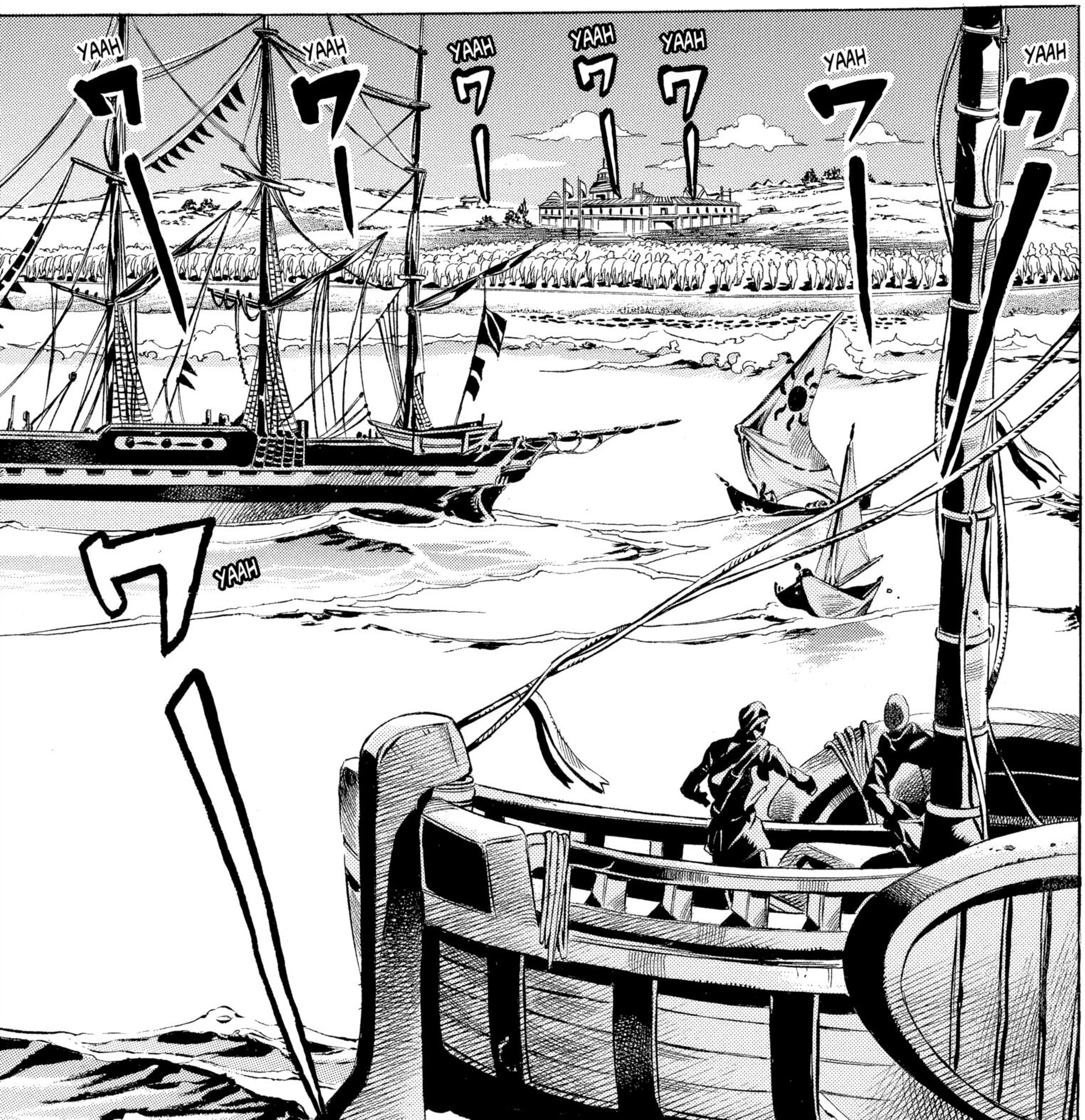
BOOM
ドン
BOOM
ドン

9:30 a.m.
Thirty Minutes
to Post Time


YAAH
ワー
YAAH
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YAAH
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YAAH
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YAAH
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YAAH
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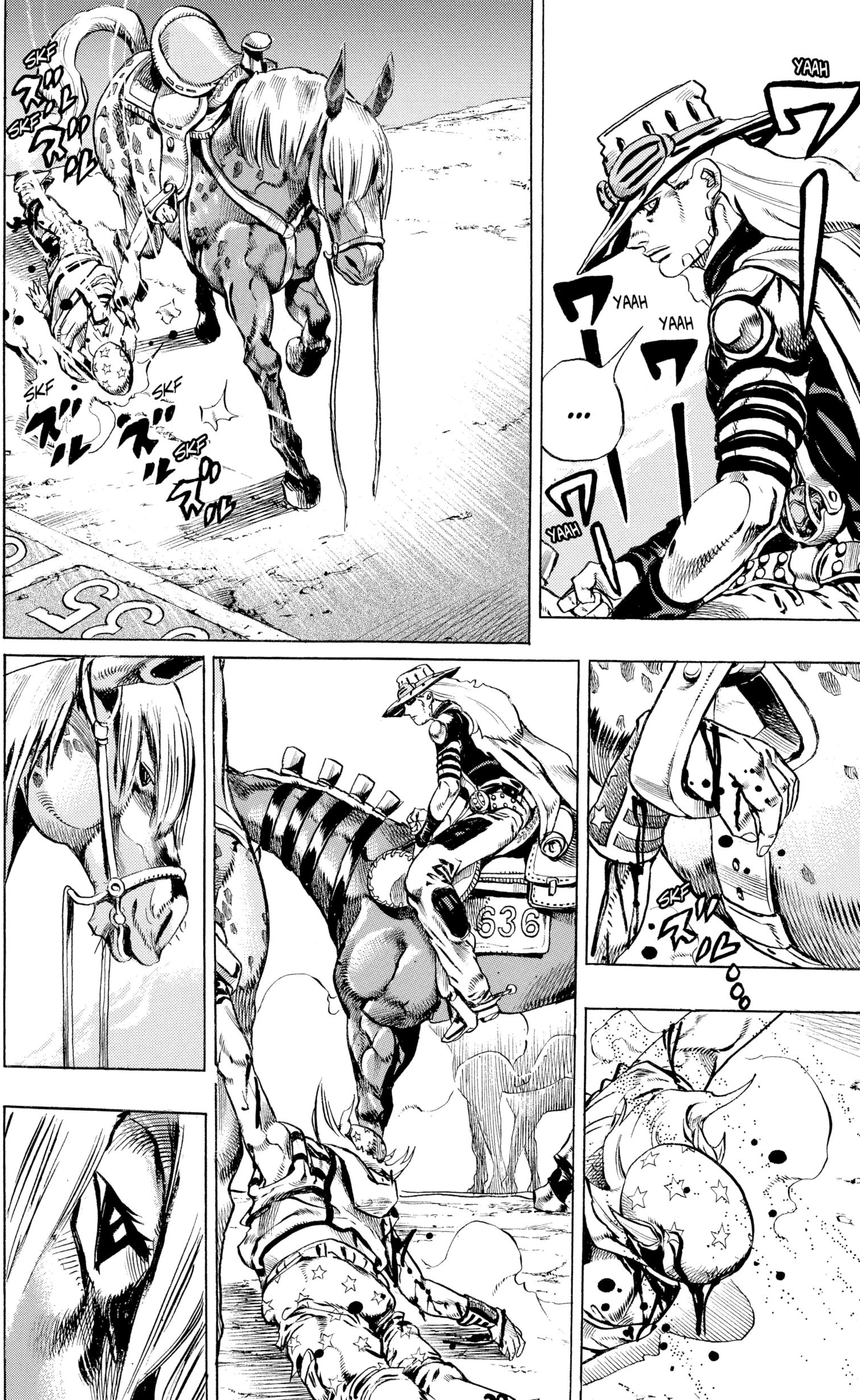
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー

YAAH
ATTENTION, RACERS!
EACH OF YOUR RACING NUMBERS CORRESPONDS TO A POSITION WITHIN THE STARTING GRID. TO ENSURE A FAIR START...
...PLEASE LINE UP WITHIN YOUR SQUARE AT LEAST TWO MINUTES BEFORE THE TEN O'CLOCK POST TIME.
C-121
C-120
ANY PARTICIPANTS WHO FAIL TO LINE UP BEFORE 9:58 OR LEAVE THEIR STARTING POSITION DURING THE FOLLOWING TWO-MINUTE WINDOW...
...WILL BE PENALIZED FOR A FALSE START! SO PLEASE BE CAREFUL.
YAAH
B-63
AFTER THE PARADE OF THE LILLIPUTIAN HORSES—OUR RACE MASCOTS—AND ACCOMPANYING MUSICAL PERFORMANCE...
...THERE WILL BE AN OPENING SPEECH BY THE STEEL BALL RUN'S PROMOTER AND DIRECTOR, STEVEN STEEL!
DA-DUM
DUM
KLOP
STEE
R
STEEL
RACE
SHF
KLOP
FWSH
FLUTTR

THIS ICE...
T
R
C
...COMES FROM A PLACE CALLED *THE SOUTH POLE*—A LAND THAT BELONGS TO NO NATION!
ACCORDING TO SCIENTISTS, IT WAS FROZEN 300 MILLION YEARS AGO.
WE DRILLED A HOLE INTO THIS ICE AND PLACED THE TROPHY THAT WILL BE CLAIMED BY OUR CHAMPION INSIDE OF IT.
THIS WILL HENCEFORTH BE KNOWN AS THE *SACRED ICE* OF THE *STEEL BALL RUN!* AND OUR COLLECTIVE BURNING PASSION WILL BE WHAT MELTS IT!
STEEL BALL RUN RACE
STEEL BALL RUN RACE
STEEL BALL RUN RACE
THIS FROZEN TROPHY CASE WILL BE TRANSPORTED TO NEW YORK CITY BY LOCOMOTIVE. IT HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO MELT JUST AS OUR RACERS REACH THE FINISH LINE!
THIS ICE REPRESENTS PROGRESS AND THE COMPETITIVE SPIRIT! MAY YOU ALL HAVE A SAFE JOURNEY.
THAT CONCLUDES MY OPENING STATEMENT.
EHHHH?!
YOU COULD SAY I REALLY **BROKE THE ICE!**
HA!
PFFF!
GAH!
I'LL NEVER UNHEAR THAT...
パチ CLAP
パチ CLAP

AAAAAAR
SAN DIEGO! NEW YORK!
SAN DIEGO! NEW YORK!
ROAAAAA
SAN DIEGO! NEW YORK!
SAN DIEGO! NEW YORK!
SAN DIEGO! NEW YORK!
CLAP CLAP CLAP
THE ANTICIPATED FRONT-RUNNERS HAVE ENTERED THE STAGING AREA!
THERE'S THE COWBOY, MOUNTAIN TIM!
YAAH
SAN DIEGO! NEW YORK!
I'M ALSO SEEING THE YOUNG ARISTOCRAT FROM THE WORLD OF ENGLISH HORSE RACING, DIEGO BRANDO!
SAN DIEGO! NEW YORK!
THE SAHARAN NOMAD, URMD AVDUL, HAS JUST ARRIVED ON HIS CAMEL!
YAAH
SAN DIEGO! NEW YORK!
SAN DIEGO! NEW YORK!
AND THERE'S DOTT HAN ALL THE WAY FROM MONGOLIA!
YAAH
SAN DIEGO! NEW YORK!
SAN DIEGO! NEW YORK!
WE'RE NOW ONLY FIVE MINUTES AWAY FROM THE START OF THE RACE!
RACERS HAVE THREE MINUTES TO GET TO THEIR POSITIONS IN THE STARTING GRID! PLEASE LINE UP AT YOUR DESIGNATED NUMBER!
YAAH YAAH
YAAH
HEY, LOOK.
IT'S HIM!
TOLD YOU HE WAS CRAZY.
THAT'S JUST SAD.


YAAH
ワー
YAAH
ワー
YAAH
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YAAH
ワー
...
SKF
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SKF
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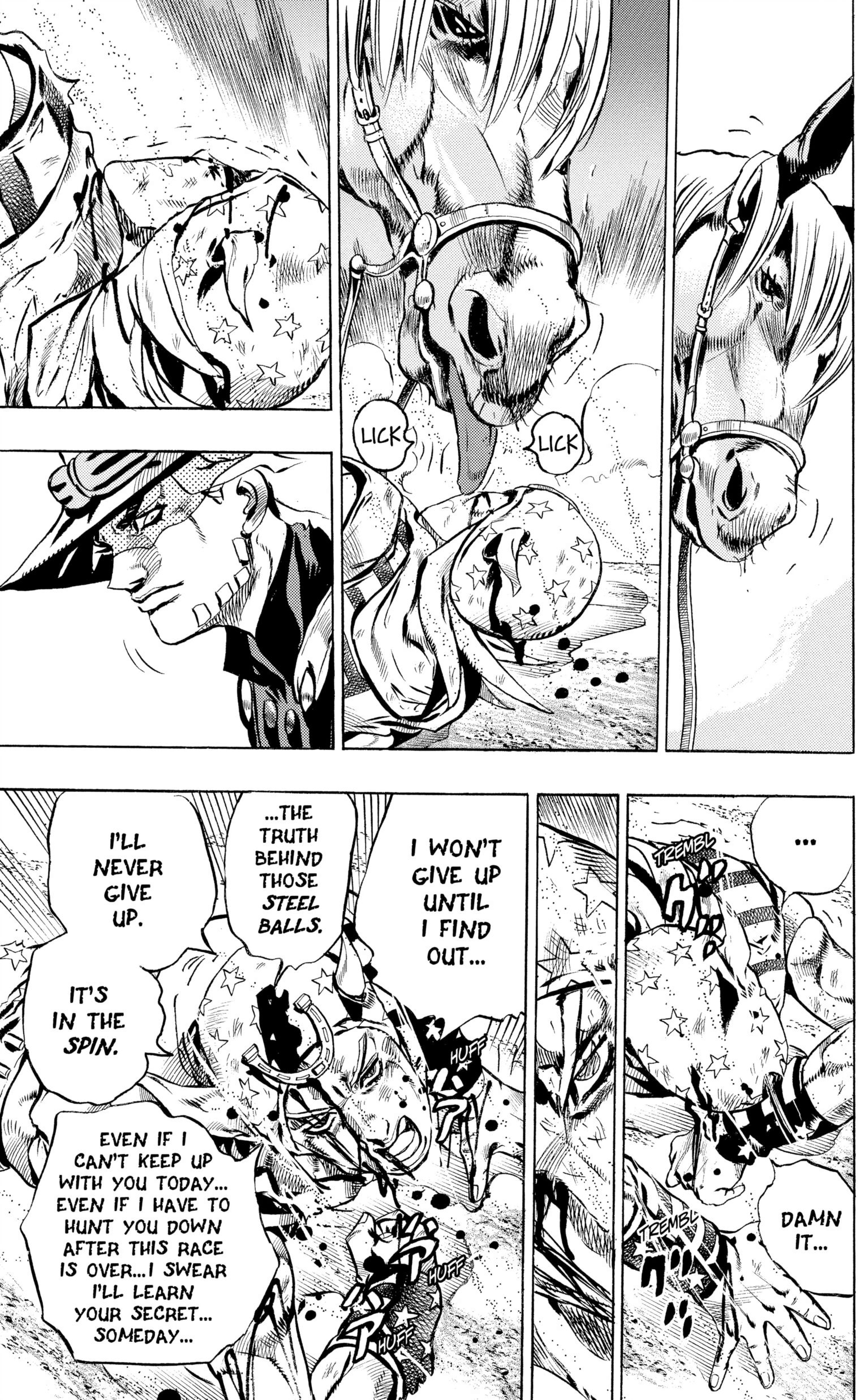
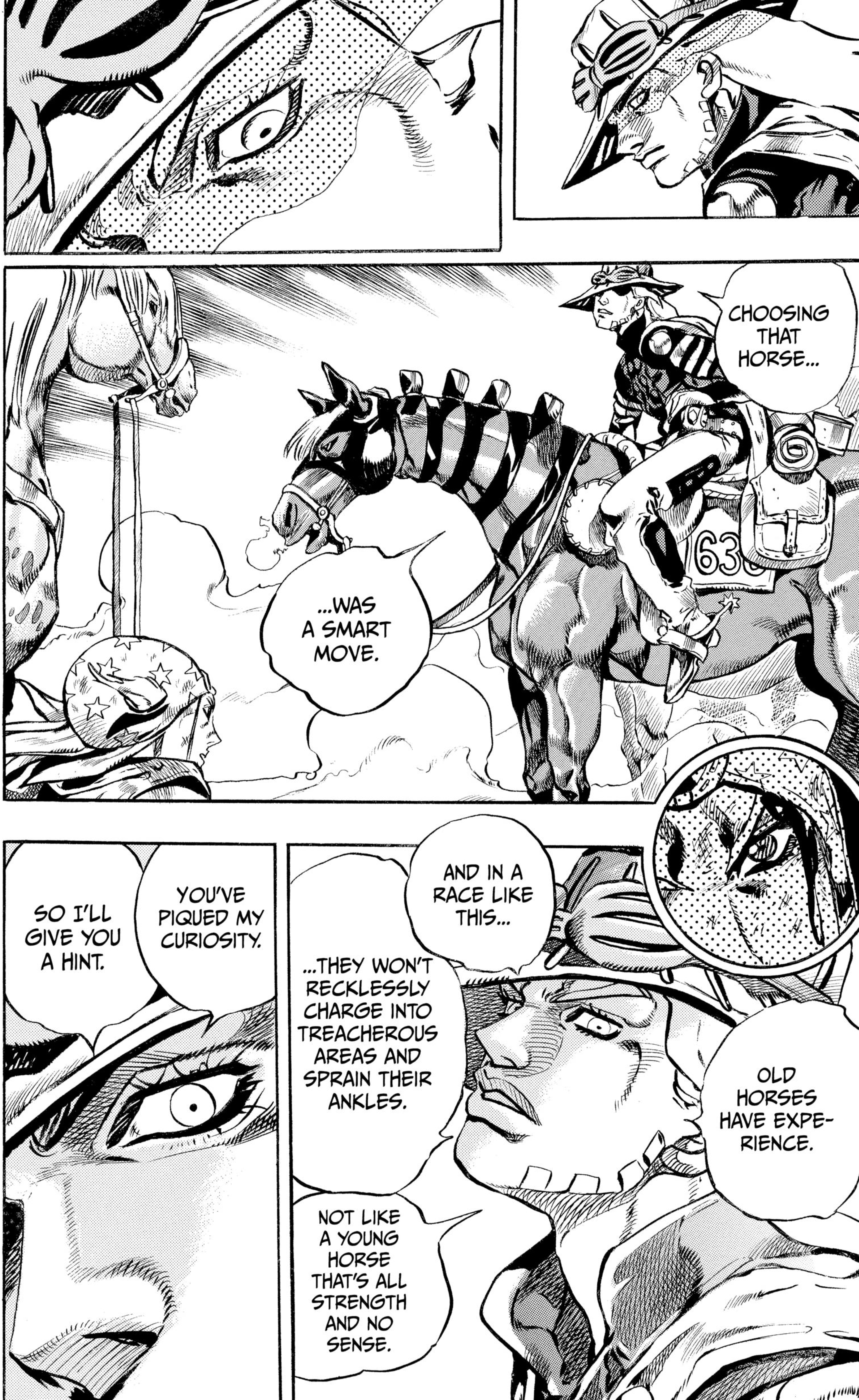
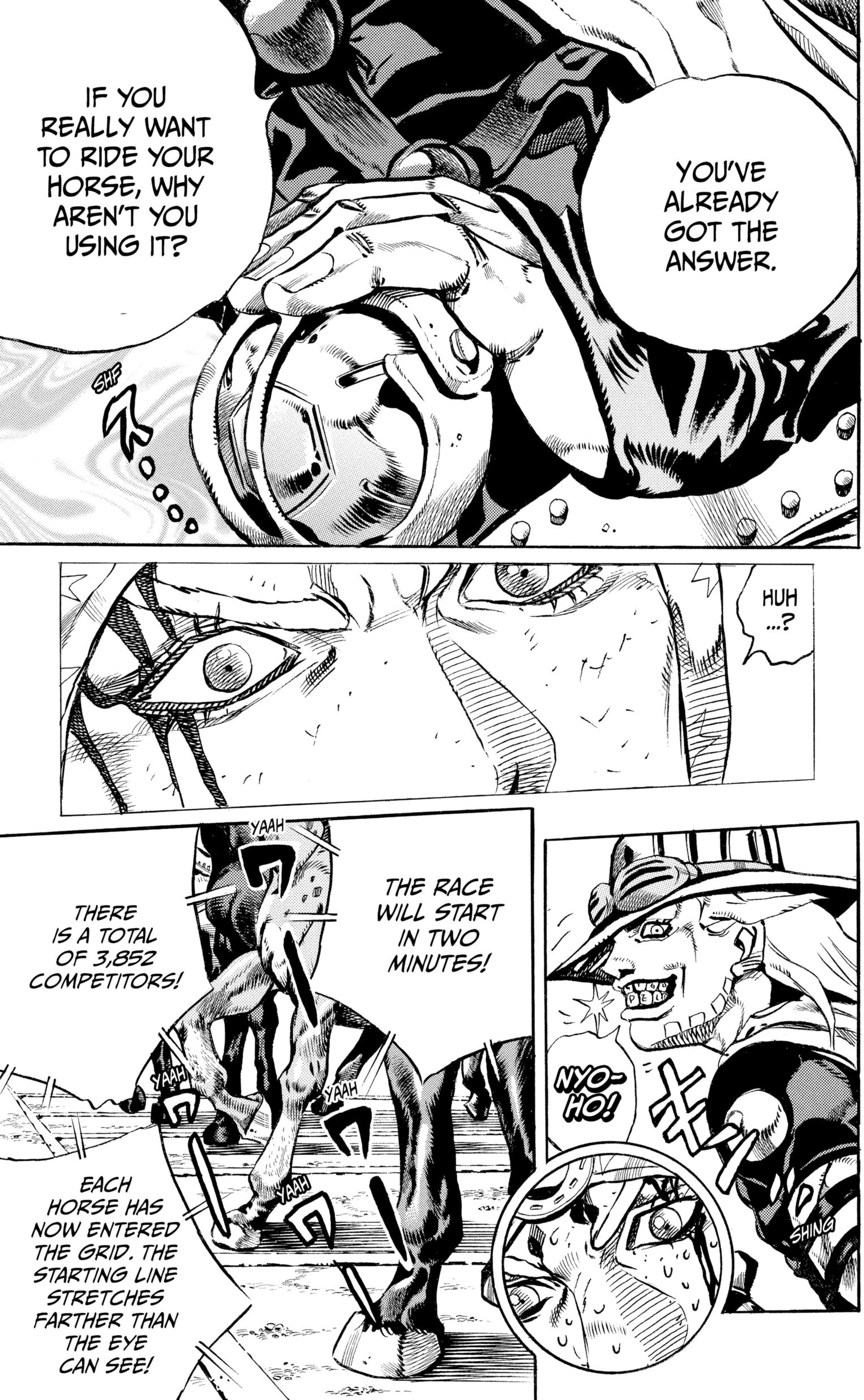
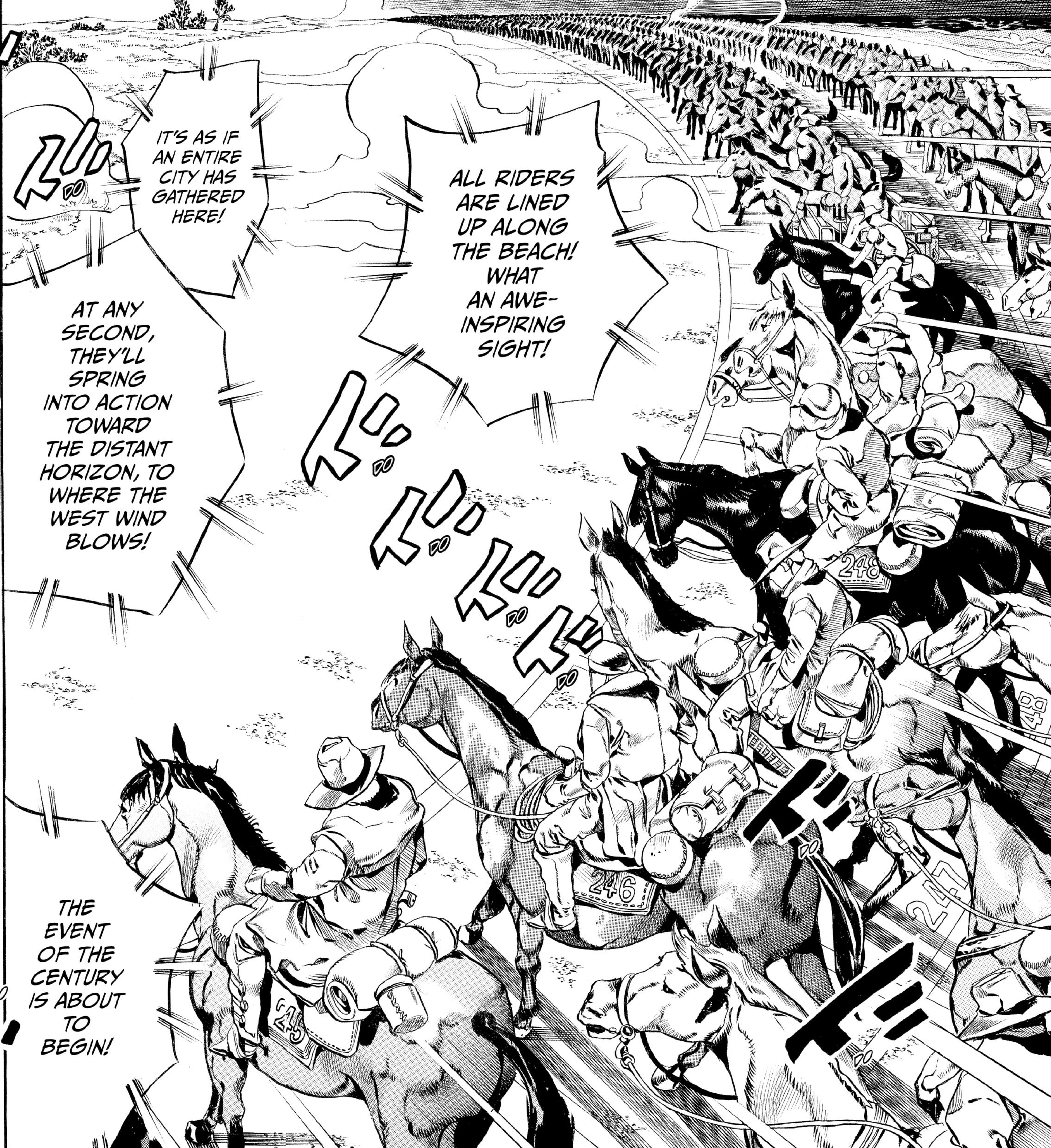
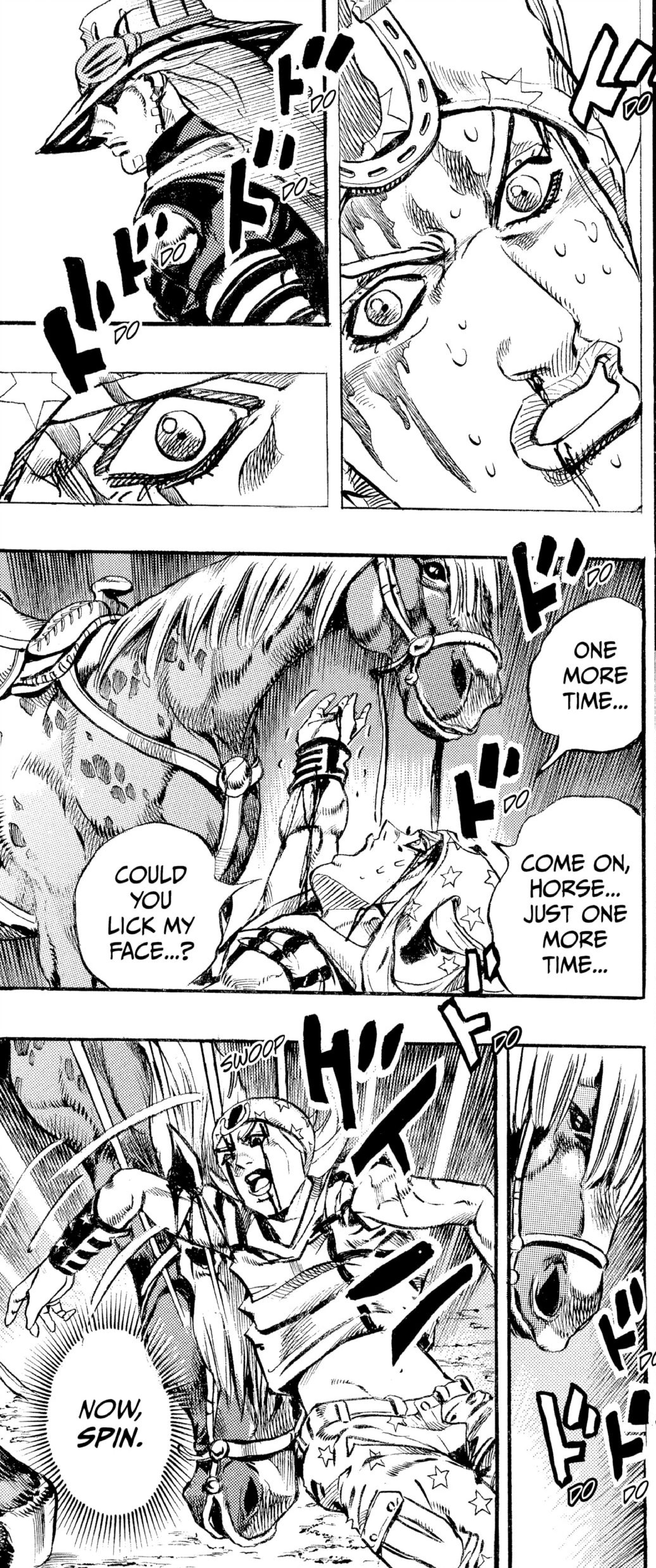
636
SKF
ズルッ


LICK
LICK
...
TREMBL
DAMN IT...
TREMBL
I WON'T GIVE UP UNTIL I FIND OUT...
...THE TRUTH BEHIND THOSE *STEEL BALLS.*
I'LL NEVER GIVE UP.
IT'S IN THE *SPIN.*
HUFF
EVEN IF I CAN'T KEEP UP WITH YOU TODAY... EVEN IF I HAVE TO HUNT YOU DOWN AFTER THIS RACE IS OVER...I SWEAR I'LL LEARN YOUR SECRET... SOMEDAY...
HUFF
HUFF


CHOOSING THAT HORSE...
...WAS A SMART MOVE.
OLD HORSES HAVE EXPERIENCE.
AND IN A RACE LIKE THIS...
...THEY WON'T RECKLESSLY CHARGE INTO TREACHEROUS AREAS AND SPRAIN THEIR ANKLES.
NOT LIKE A YOUNG HORSE THAT'S ALL STRENGTH AND NO SENSE.
YOU'VE PIQUED MY CURIOSITY.
SO I'LL GIVE YOU A HINT.
630


YOU'VE ALREADY GOT THE ANSWER.
IF YOU REALLY WANT TO RIDE YOUR HORSE, WHY AREN'T YOU USING IT?
SHF
HUH ...?
NYO-HO!
SHING
THE RACE WILL START IN TWO MINUTES!
THERE IS A TOTAL OF 3,852 COMPETITORS!
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
EACH HORSE HAS NOW ENTERED THE GRID. THE STARTING LINE STRETCHES FARTHER THAN THE EYE CAN SEE!

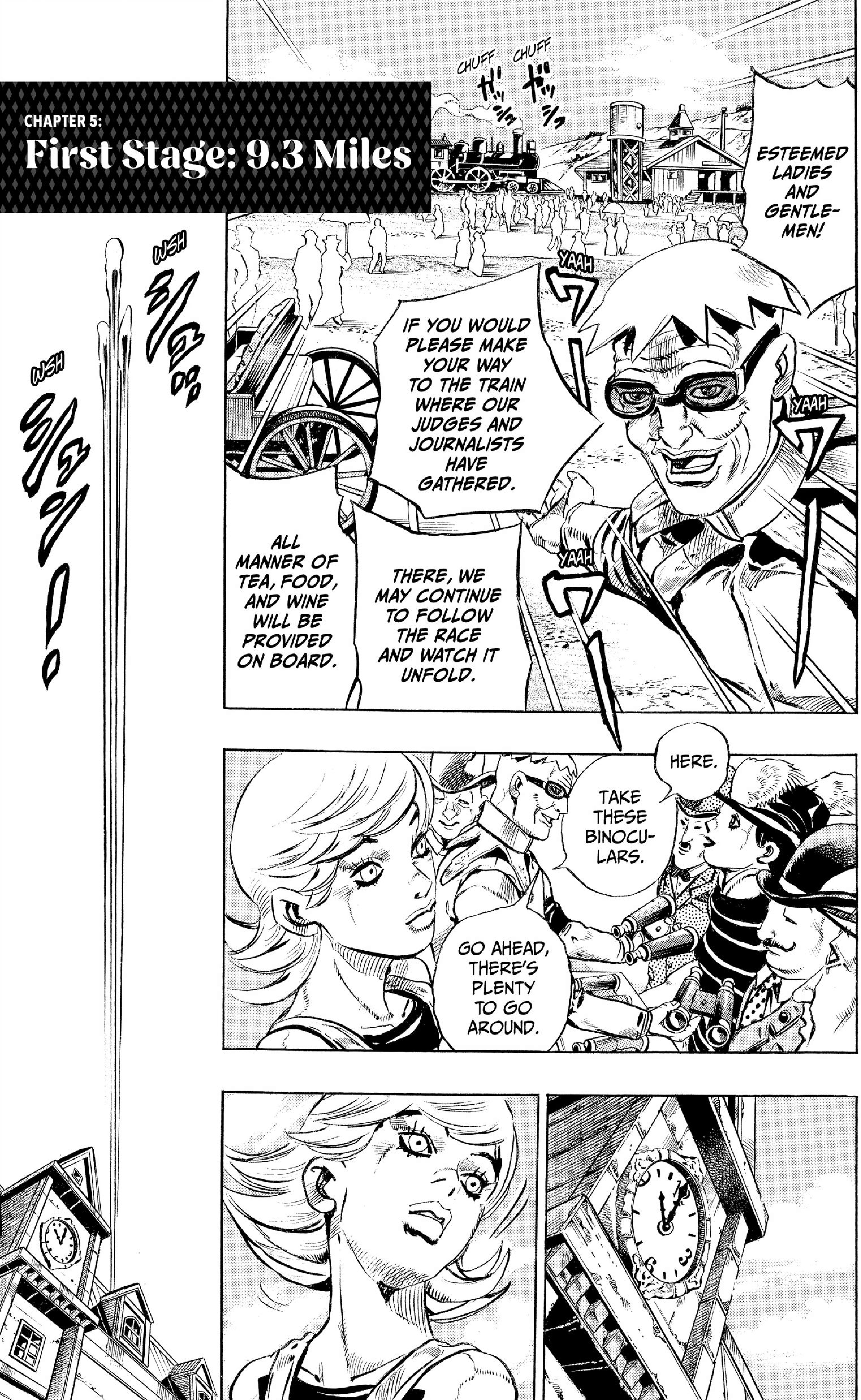

ALL RIDERS ARE LINED UP ALONG THE BEACH! WHAT AN AWE-INSPIRING SIGHT!
IT'S AS IF AN ENTIRE CITY HAS GATHERED HERE!
AT ANY SECOND, THEY'LL SPRING INTO ACTION TOWARD THE DISTANT HORIZON, TO WHERE THE WEST WIND BLOWS!
THE EVENT OF THE CENTURY IS ABOUT TO BEGIN!
ドドドドドド DO DO DO DO DO DO
248
246
245
247


ドドドドドド DO DO DO DO DO DO
ONE MORE TIME...
COME ON, HORSE... JUST ONE MORE TIME...
COULD YOU LICK MY FACE...?
ドド DO DO
SWOOP
ドドドド DO DO DO DO
NOW, SPIN.

SWOOOOSH
THE SPIN.
ALL HOPE...
...IS IN THE MOVEMENT OF THE SPIN! BUT I NEED TO KNOW MORE... MORE ABOUT THOSE STEEL BALLS.
WHIRRRL
DOOM
THE STEEL BALL RUN BEGINS NOW!!

CHAPTER 5:

First Stage: 9.3 Miles

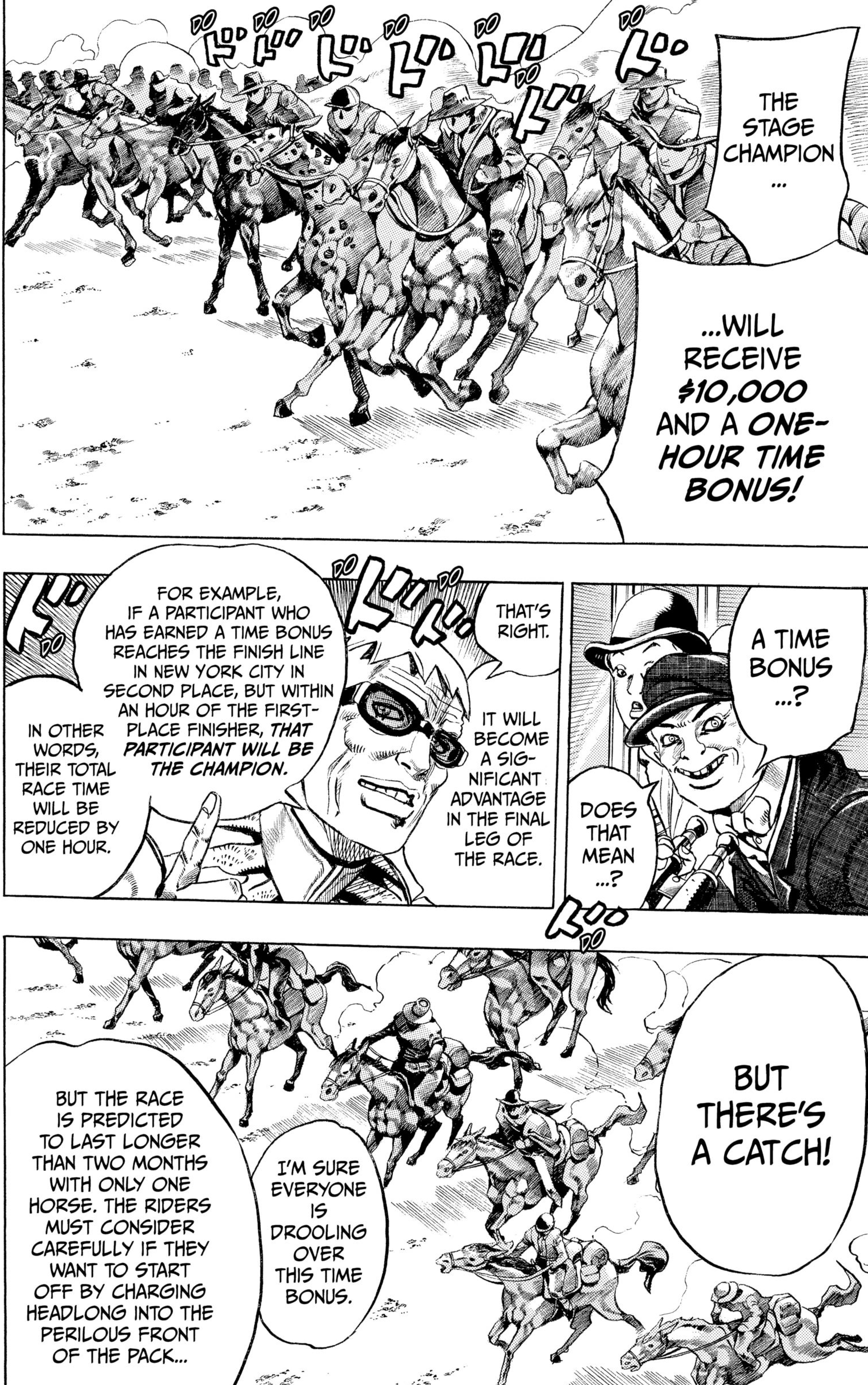

CHUFF
CHUFF
ESTEEMED LADIES AND GENTLE-MEN!
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
IF YOU WOULD PLEASE MAKE YOUR WAY TO THE TRAIN WHERE OUR JUDGES AND JOURNALISTS HAVE GATHERED.
THERE, WE MAY CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THE RACE AND WATCH IT UNFOLD.
ALL MANNER OF TEA, FOOD, AND WINE WILL BE PROVIDED ON BOARD.
WSH
WSH
HERE.
TAKE THESE BINOCU-LARS.
GO AHEAD, THERE'S PLENTY TO GO AROUND.

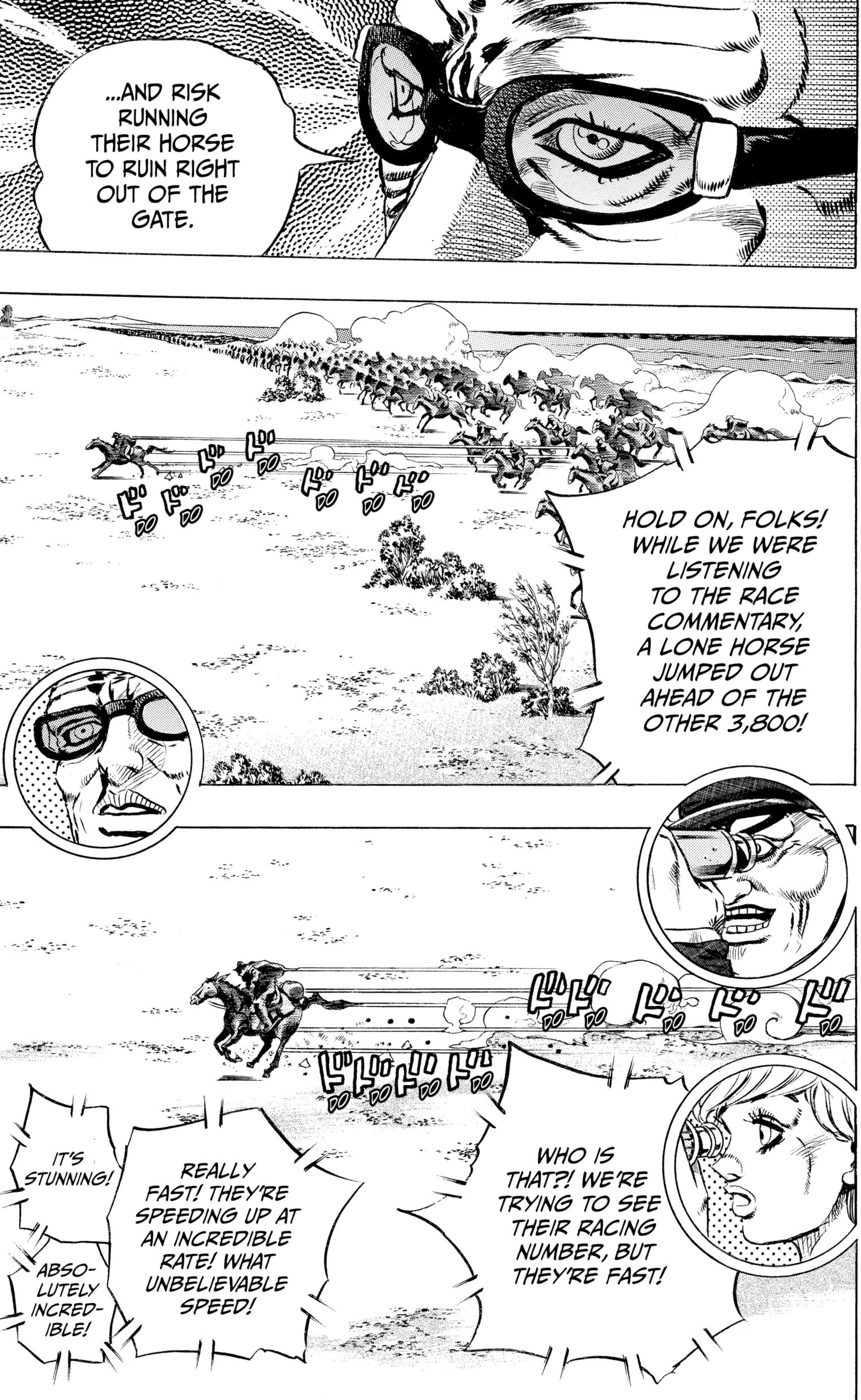
BOOM
BOOM
ドドドーン
KRACKL
KRACKL
KRACKL
KRACKL
KRACKL
パパパパパ
THE FIREWORKS ARE THE STARTING SIGNAL—AND THEY'RE OFF!
AFTER ALL THE ANTICIPATION, AT 10 A.M. SEPTEMBER 25, 1890, THE NORTH AMERICAN TRANSCONTINENTAL STEEL BALL RUN HAS FINALLY BEGUN!

CHAPTER 5:

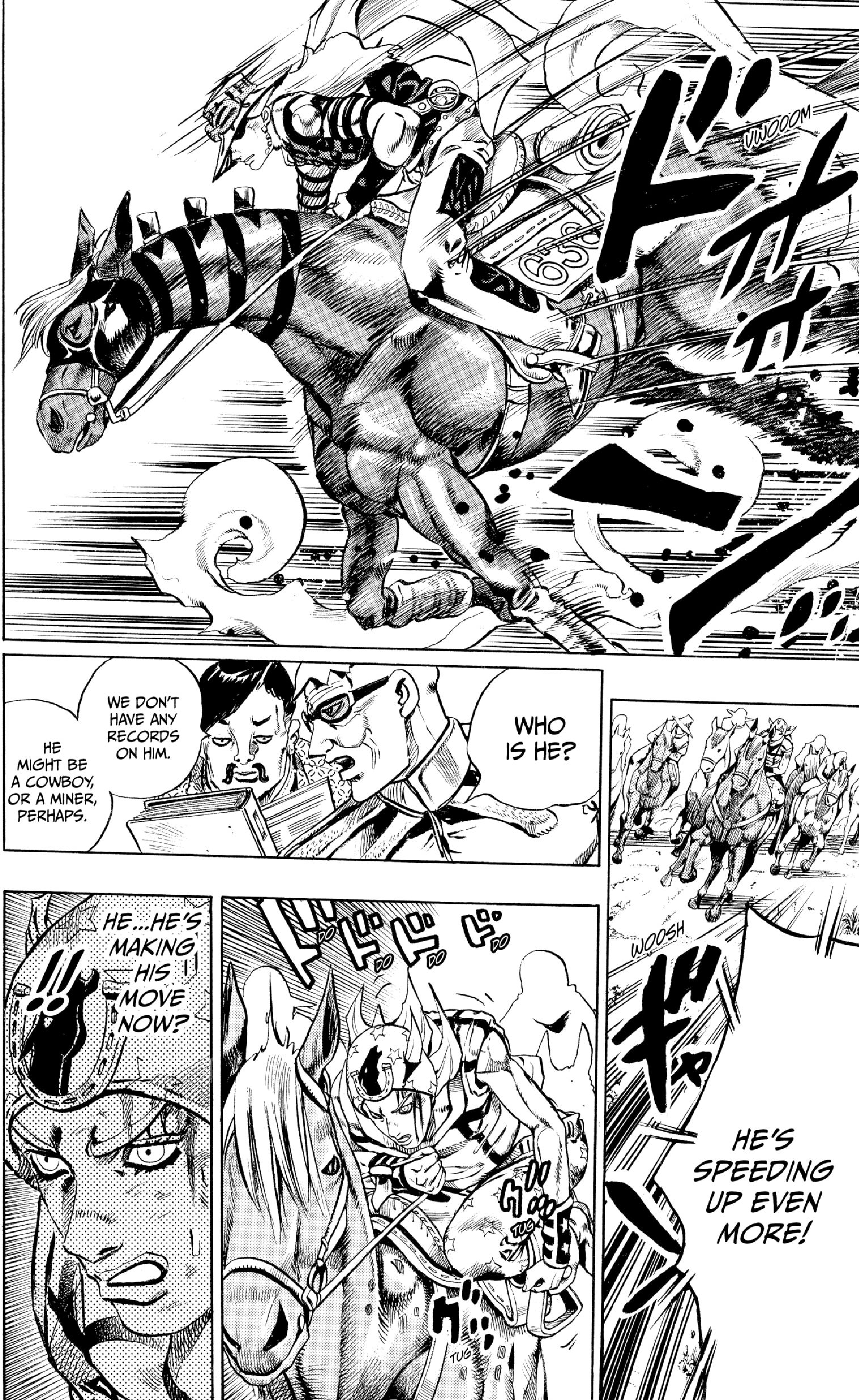
First Stage: 9.3 Miles

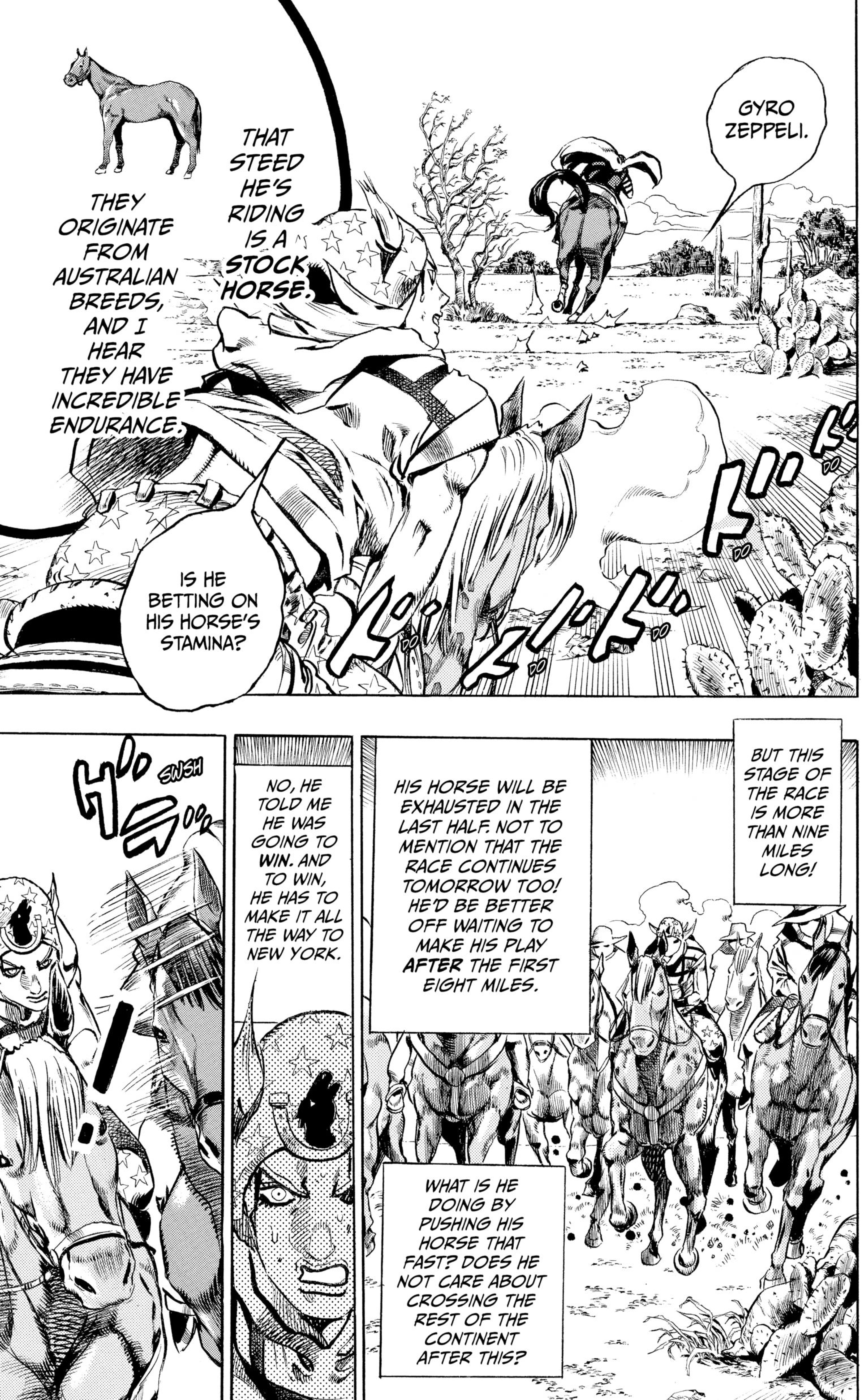
THAT'S WELL OVER 3,800 HORSES, FOLKS! AND YET THERE'S NO SIGN OF CONFUSION AMONG THE RIDERS.
CHUGGA CHUGGA
CHUGGA CHUGGA
THE STARTING LINE STRETCHES MORE THAN TWO AND A HALF MILES.
ALL AT ONCE, THE HORSES HAVE TAKEN OFF FROM THE PACIFIC OCEAN LIKE A WAVE GRADUALLY SWEEPING OVER THE LAND!
DO GO GO GO
FOR THE JOURNALISTS ON BOARD, ALLOW ME TO OUTLINE THE ROUTE ALONG WHICH THE RACE WILL PROGRESS.
SPANNING 3,700 MILES BETWEEN SAN DIEGO AND NEW YORK CITY ON THE ATLANTIC OCEAN...
NEW YORK
SAN DIEGO
...THE ROUTE PASSES THROUGH NINE PRE-DETERMINED CHECKPOINTS MARKED ON THE MAP HERE.
GO GO GO
THE CHECKPOINTS VERIFY THE RACERS' POSITIONS AND TIMES. THEY ALSO SCREEN THEM FOR ANY UNFAIR CONDUCT, SUCH AS SWAPPING HORSES.
First Stage: 9.3 Miles
EACH COURSE LEADING UP TO ITS RESPECTIVE CHECKPOINT MARKS A SPECIFIC STAGE OF THE RACE.
THERE ARE NINE STAGES IN TOTAL!
THE FIRST STAGE, WHICH BEGAN ONLY MOMENTS AGO, IS A SHORT-RANGE SPRINT TO A CATHOLIC MISSION 9.3 MILES AWAY.
GO GO GO GO
AND AT THE END OF EACH STAGE, A WINNER WILL BE DECIDED... AND THEY WILL BE AWARDED A MONETARY PRIZE.

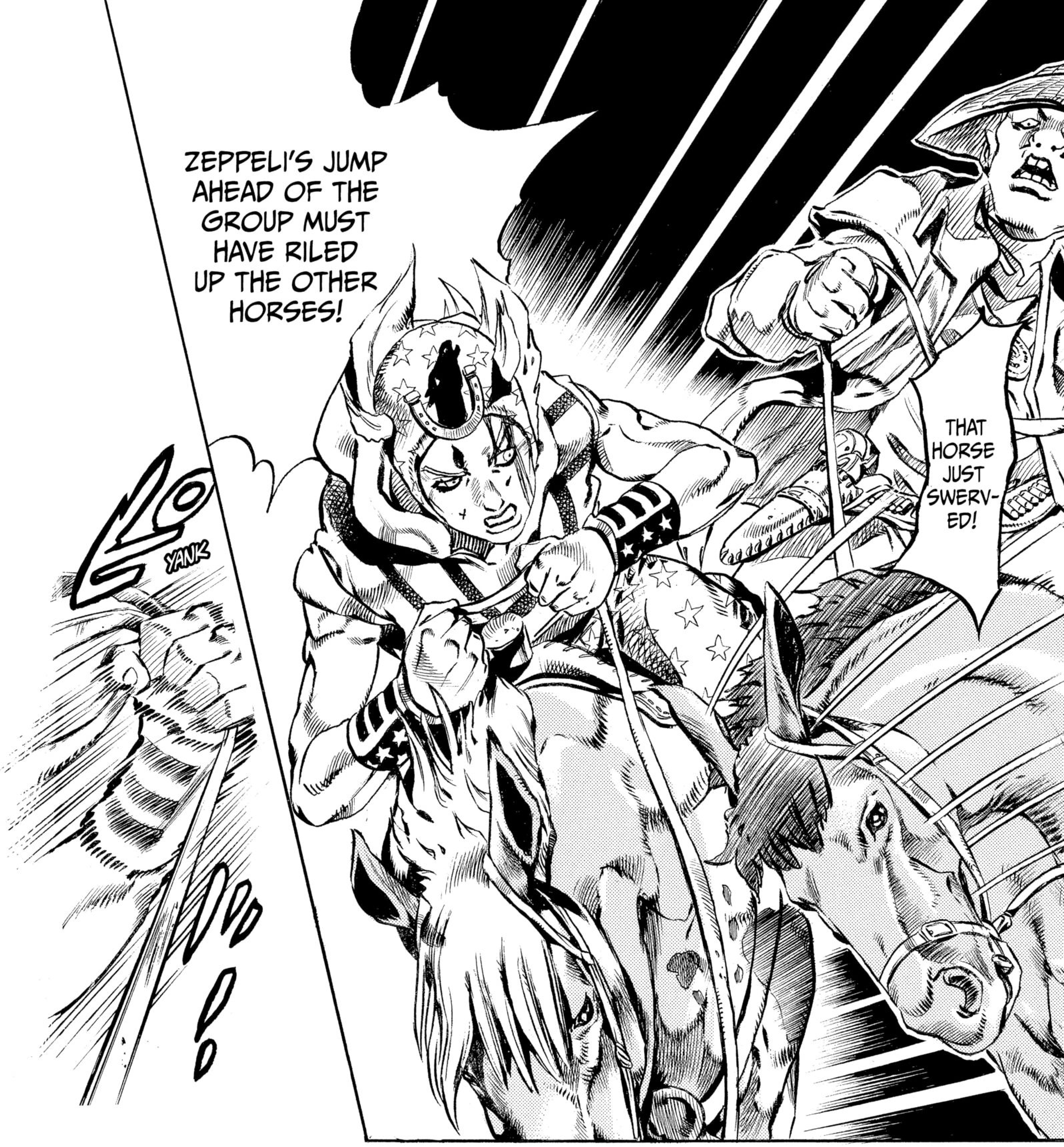

ドド DO DO
ドド DO DO
ドド DO DO
ド DO
THE STAGE CHAMPION ...
...WILL RECEIVE $10,000 AND A *ONE-HOUR TIME BONUS!*
A TIME BONUS ...?
DOES THAT MEAN ...?
ドド DO DO
THAT'S RIGHT.
IT WILL BECOME A SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGE IN THE FINAL LEG OF THE RACE.
FOR EXAMPLE, IF A PARTICIPANT WHO HAS EARNED A TIME BONUS REACHES THE FINISH LINE IN NEW YORK CITY IN SECOND PLACE, BUT WITHIN AN HOUR OF THE FIRST-PLACE FINISHER, *THAT PARTICIPANT WILL BE THE CHAMPION.*
IN OTHER WORDS, THEIR TOTAL RACE TIME WILL BE REDUCED BY ONE HOUR.
ド DO
ド DO
BUT THERE'S A CATCH!
I'M SURE EVERYONE IS DROOLING OVER THIS TIME BONUS.
BUT THE RACE IS PREDICTED TO LAST LONGER THAN TWO MONTHS WITH ONLY ONE HORSE. THE RIDERS MUST CONSIDER CAREFULLY IF THEY WANT TO START OFF BY CHARGING HEADLONG INTO THE PERILOUS FRONT OF THE PACK...

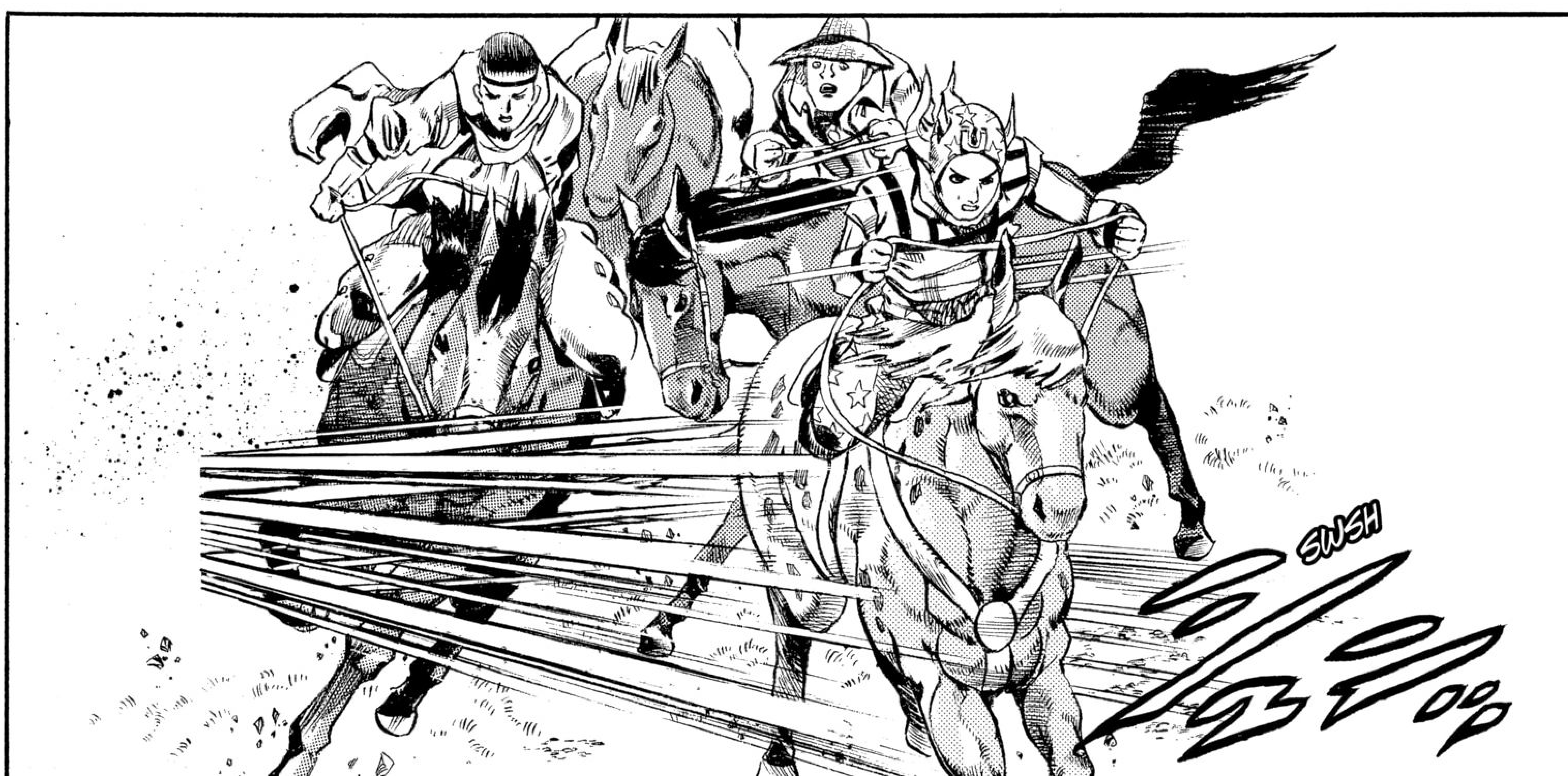

...AND RISK RUNNING THEIR HORSE TO RUIN RIGHT OUT OF THE GATE.
HOLD ON, FOLKS! WHILE WE WERE LISTENING TO THE RACE COMMENTARY, A LONE HORSE JUMPED OUT AHEAD OF THE OTHER 3,800!
ドドドドドドド DO DO DO DO DO DO DO
ドドドドド DO DO DO DO DO
ドドドド DO DO DO DO
WHO IS THAT?! WE'RE TRYING TO SEE THEIR RACING NUMBER, BUT THEY'RE FAST!
REALLY FAST! THEY'RE SPEEDING UP AT AN INCREDIBLE RATE! WHAT UNBELIEVABLE SPEED!
IT'S STUNNING!
ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE!

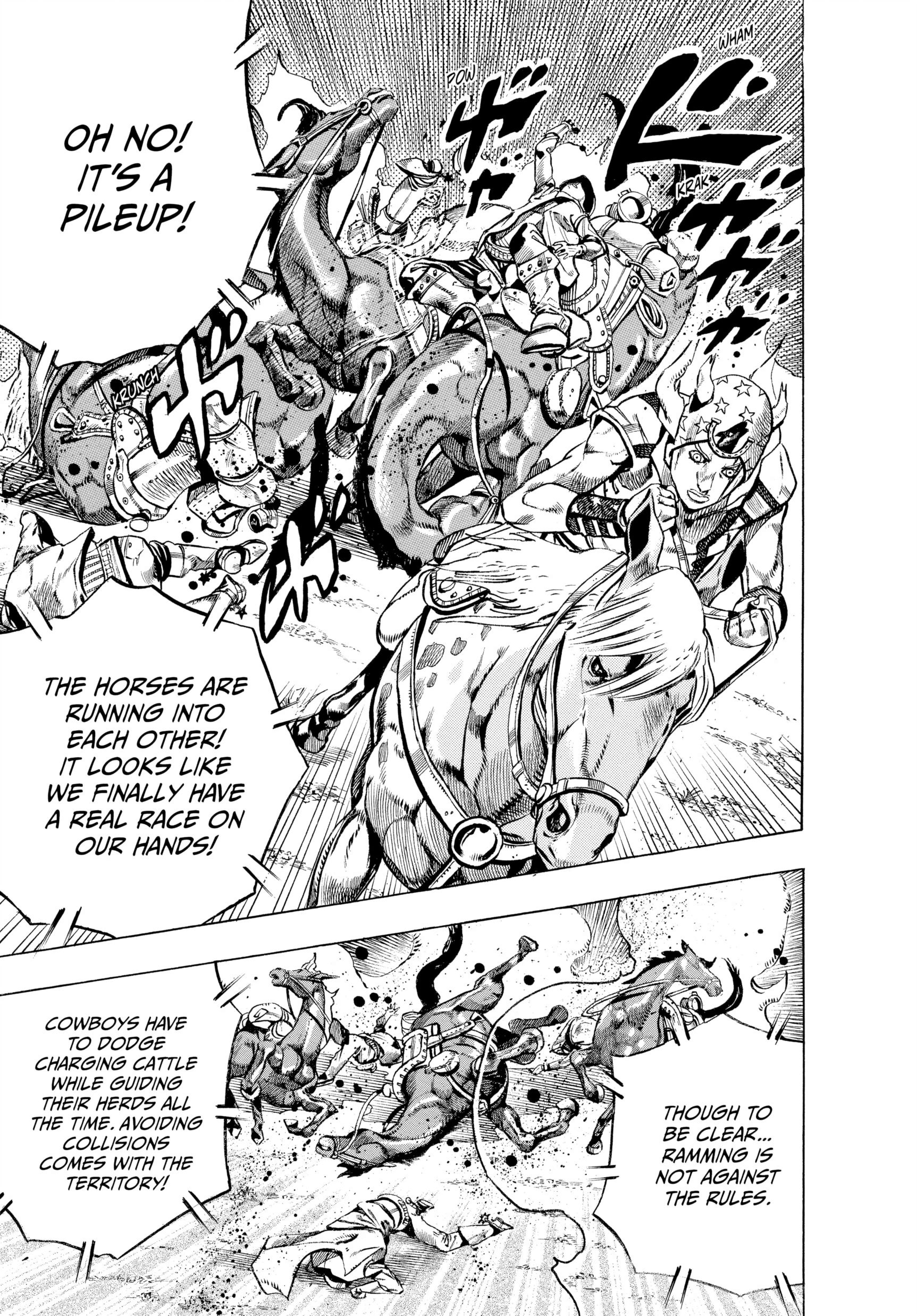
ドドドド DO DO DO
THIS EARLY INTO THE FIRST STAGE, WE'RE ALREADY SEEING SOMETHING THAT DEFIES EXPECTATIONS!
THEY'RE SHOWING NO SIGN OF SLOWING DOWN!
ドドドド DO DO DO DO
WHAT'S THE RACING NUMBER?!
ドドドド DO DO DO
B 636
I SEE IT!
IT'S B-636!
I REPEAT, 636!
ZEPPELI...
B 636
THE RACER IS REGISTERED AS GYRO ZEPPELI!
ドドド DO DO DO
ドドドドド DO DO DO DO
ASTONISHING! PARTICIPANT B-636, GYRO ZEPPELI, HAS SEPARATED FROM THE PACK!
HE'S ATTEMPTING TO GO IT ALONE AND OUTRUN ALL THE OTHERS ACROSS THE FULL 9.3 MILES!
636
ドド DO DO
ドド DO DO
ドド DO DO


UWOOOM
WOOSH
HE'S SPEEDING UP EVEN MORE!
WHO IS HE?
WE DON'T HAVE ANY RECORDS ON HIM.
HE MIGHT BE A COWBOY, OR A MINER, PERHAPS.
DO DO DO DO
TUG
TUG
HE...HE'S MAKING HIS MOVE NOW?

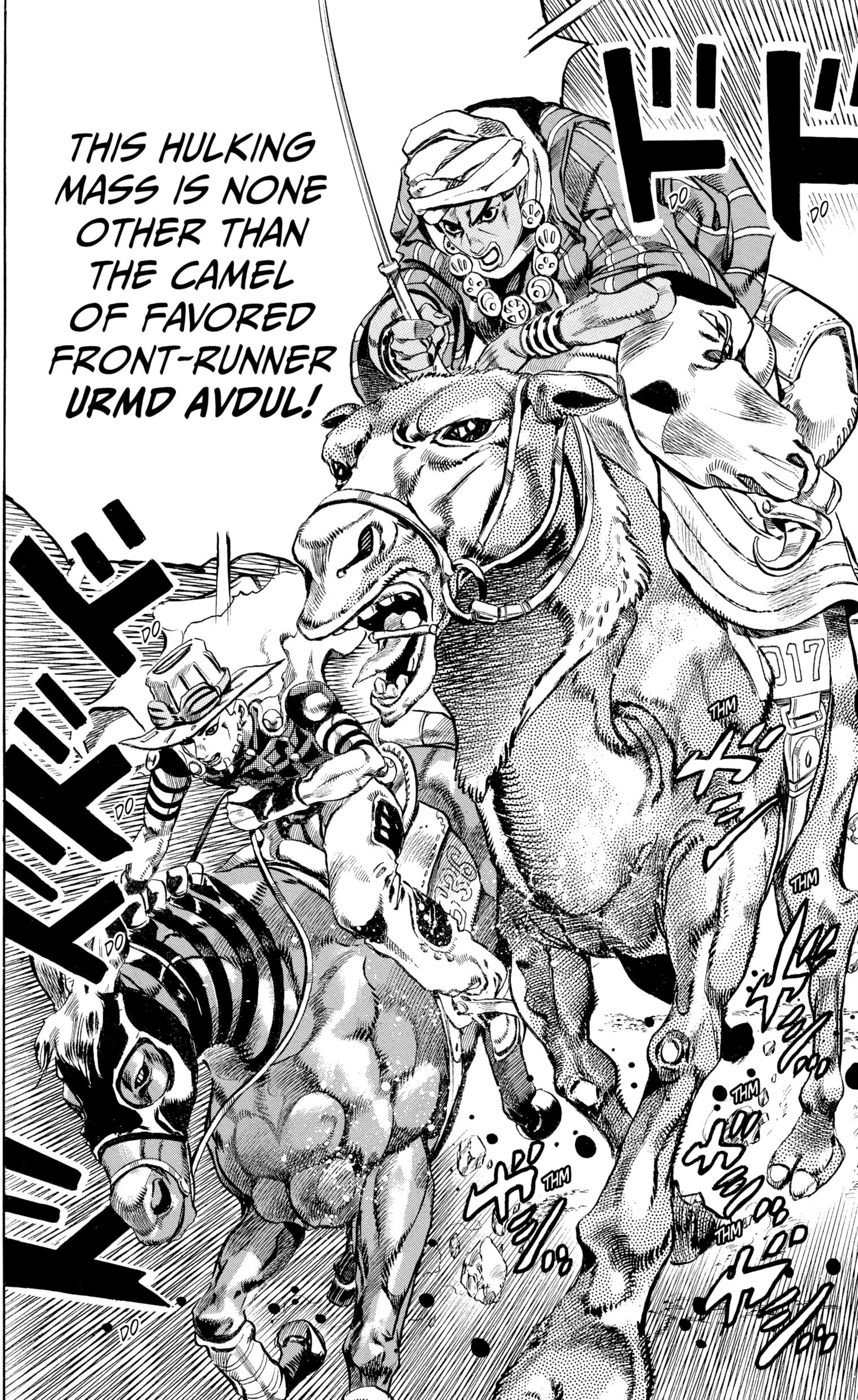

GYRO ZEPPELI.
THAT STEED HE'S RIDING IS A **STOCK HORSE.**
THEY ORIGINATE FROM AUSTRALIAN BREEDS, AND I HEAR THEY HAVE INCREDIBLE ENDURANCE.
ドドドドド
DO DO DO DO DO
IS HE BETTING ON HIS HORSE'S STAMINA?
BUT THIS STAGE OF THE RACE IS MORE THAN NINE MILES LONG!
HIS HORSE WILL BE EXHAUSTED IN THE LAST HALF. NOT TO MENTION THAT THE RACE CONTINUES TOMORROW TOO! HE'D BE BETTER OFF WAITING TO MAKE HIS PLAY **AFTER** THE FIRST EIGHT MILES.
WHAT IS HE DOING BY PUSHING HIS HORSE THAT FAST? DOES HE NOT CARE ABOUT CROSSING THE REST OF THE CONTINENT AFTER THIS?
NO, HE TOLD ME HE WAS GOING TO **WIN.** AND TO WIN, HE HAS TO MAKE IT ALL THE WAY TO NEW YORK.
SWSH

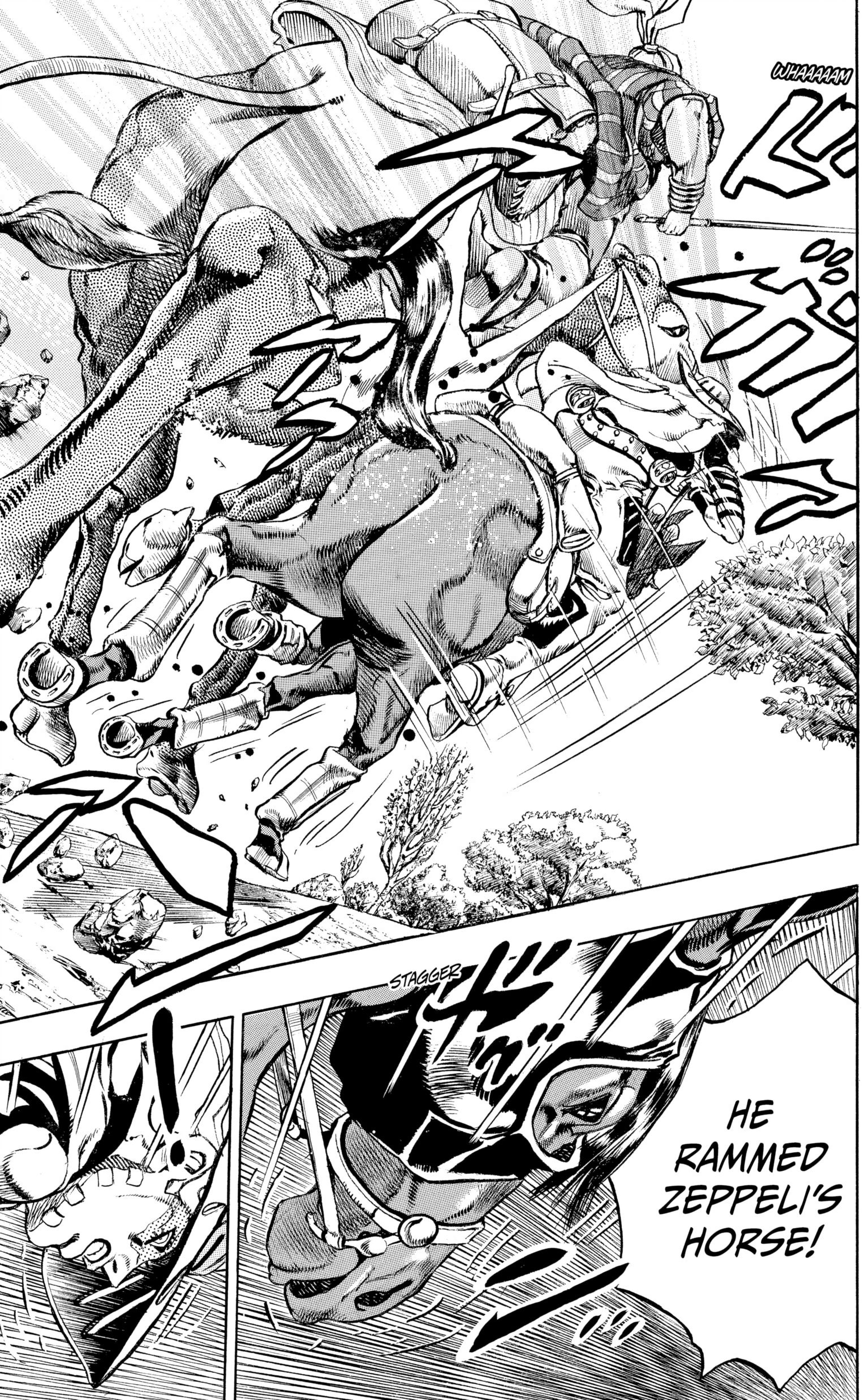

THAT HORSE JUST SWERV-ED!
ZEPPELI'S JUMP AHEAD OF THE GROUP MUST HAVE RILED UP THE OTHER HORSES!
YANK

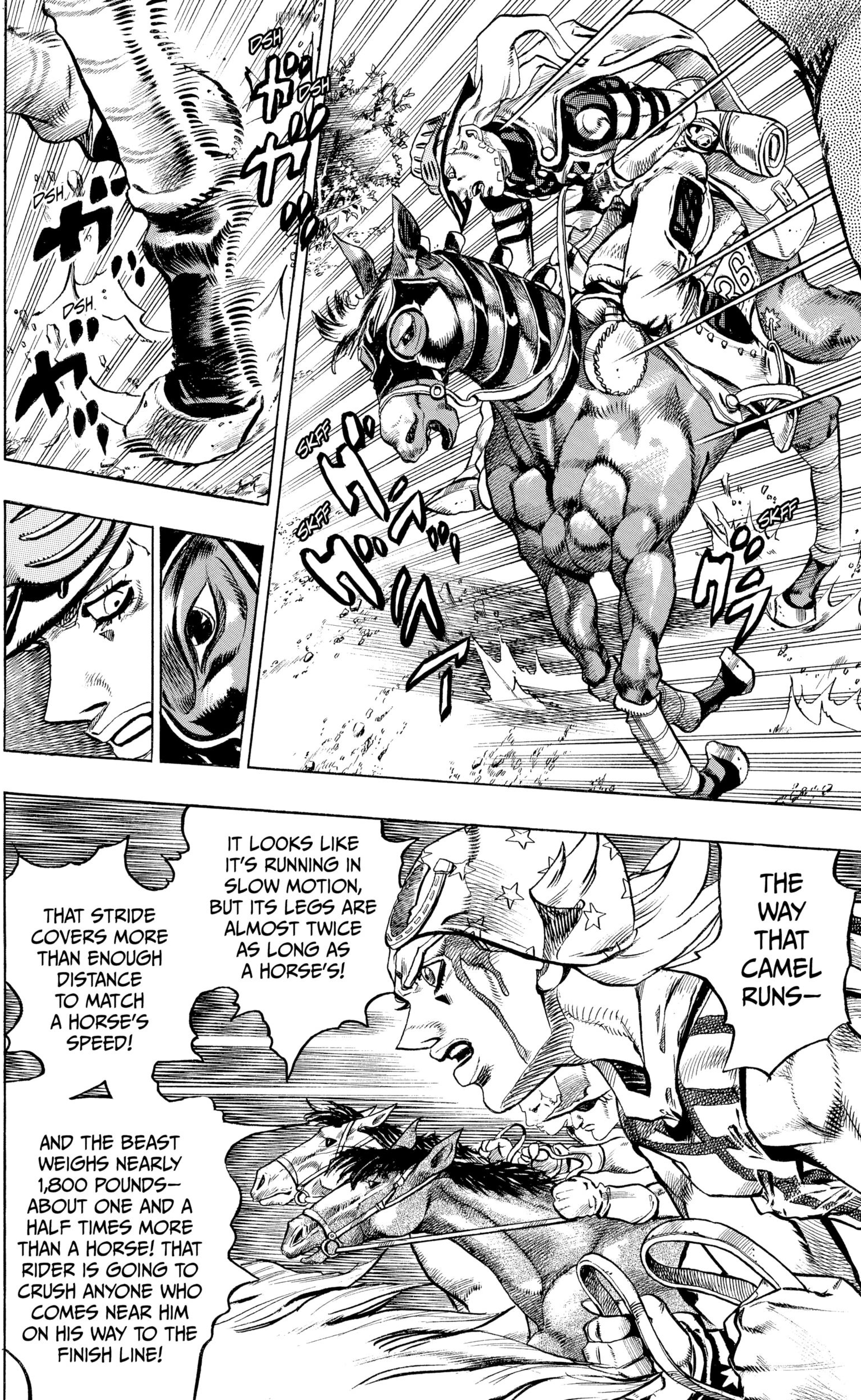

SWISH

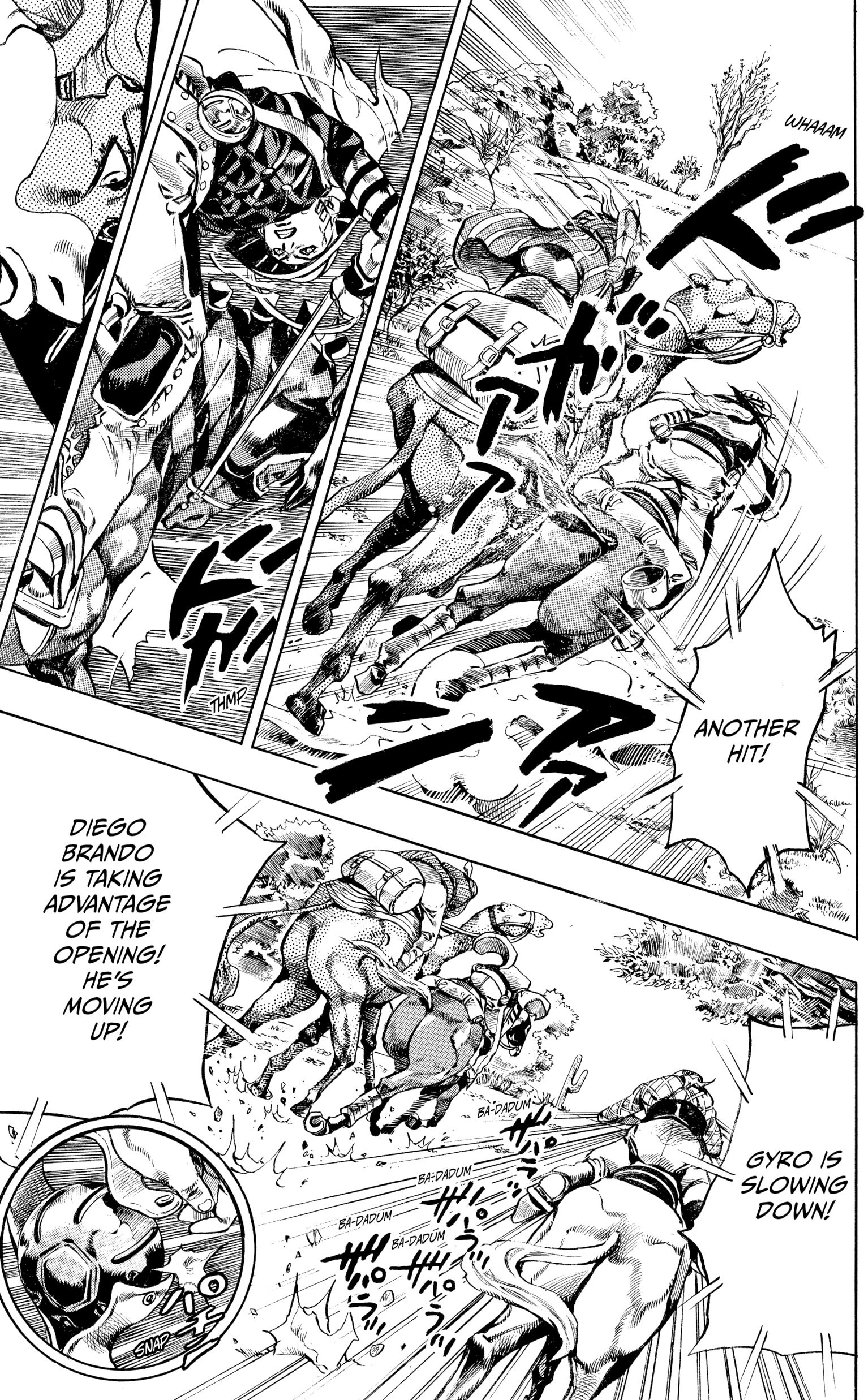

WHAM
POW
KRAK
OH NO! IT'S A PILEUP!
KRUNCH
THE HORSES ARE RUNNING INTO EACH OTHER! IT LOOKS LIKE WE FINALLY HAVE A REAL RACE ON OUR HANDS!
COWBOYS HAVE TO DODGE CHARGING CATTLE WHILE GUIDING THEIR HERDS ALL THE TIME. AVOIDING COLLISIONS COMES WITH THE TERRITORY!
THOUGH TO BE CLEAR... RAMMING IS NOT AGAINST THE RULES.

AND NOW A RIDER CHALLENGES GYRO ZEPPELI!
ANOTHER HORSE HAS EMERGED FROM THE PACK!
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
DO
DO
THERE HE GOES!
HE'S GIVING CHASE!
DO
DO
DO
HE'S CLOSING THE DISTANCE TO GYRO!
IT'S DIEGO BRANDO!!
THE YOUNG ARISTOCRAT FROM THE ENGLISH HORSE-RACING WORLD THROWS DOWN THE GAUNTLET AS IF TO SAY, "SPRINT RACING IS MY TERRITORY!"
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
NO, WAIT!
ANOTHER RIDER IS CLOSING IN ON ZEPPELI'S LEFT!
HE'S IN STRIKING DISTANCE OF ZEPPELI!
HE'S ALREADY CLOSED THE GAP!
VWOOOM
THM
THM
THM
THM
VWOOOOOOOOM


ドド
DO
DO
THIS HULKING MASS IS NONE OTHER THAN THE CAMEL OF FAVORED FRONT-RUNNER **URMD AVDUL!**
ドドド
DO
DO
DO
DO
THM
THM
THM
THM
THM
THM


WHAAAAAM
STAGGER
HE RAMMED ZEPPELI'S HORSE!

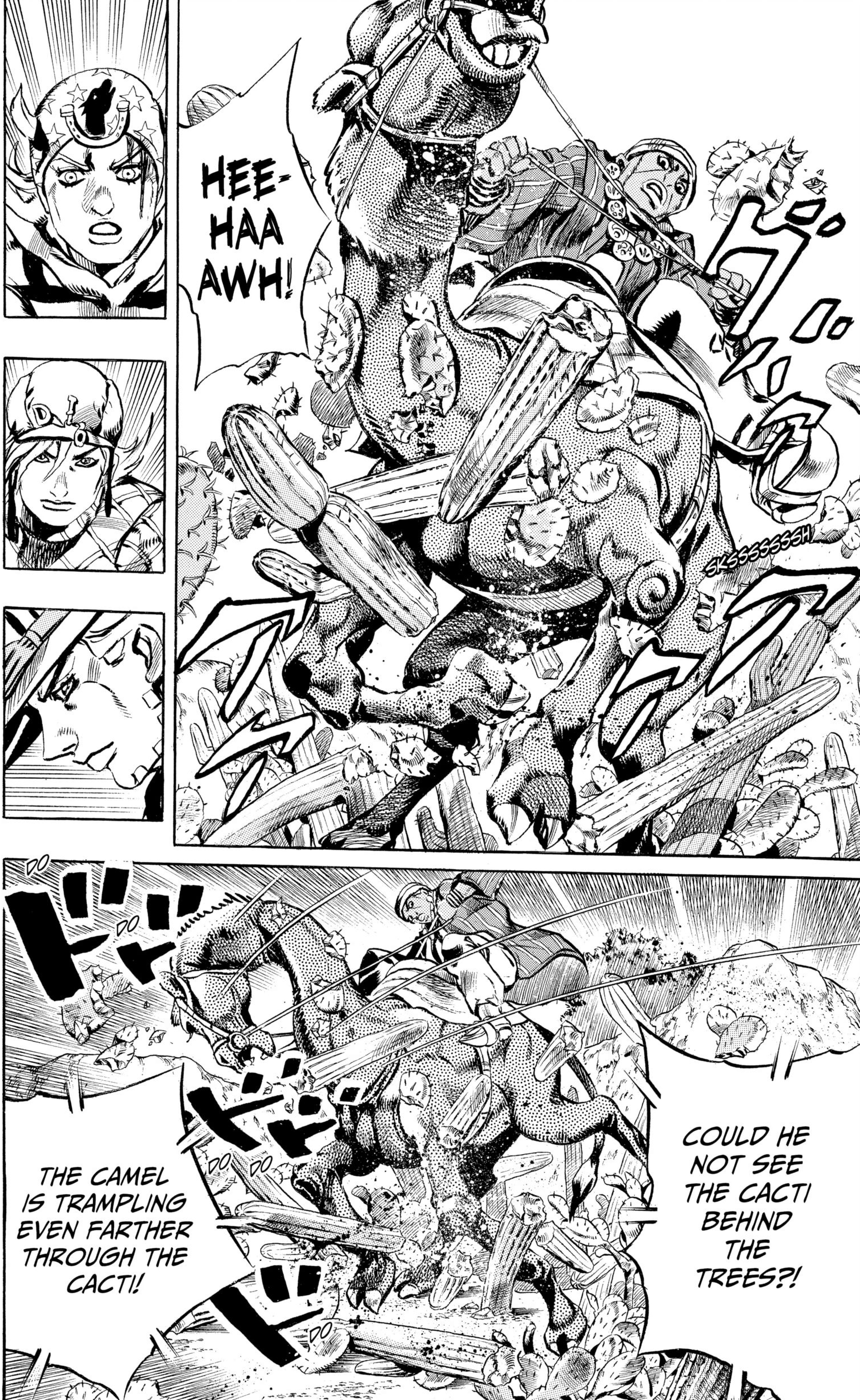

DSH
DSH
DSH
DSH
SKFF
SKFF
SKFF
THE WAY THAT CAMEL RUNS—
IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S RUNNING IN SLOW MOTION, BUT ITS LEGS ARE ALMOST TWICE AS LONG AS A HORSE'S!
THAT STRIDE COVERS MORE THAN ENOUGH DISTANCE TO MATCH A HORSE'S SPEED!
AND THE BEAST WEIGHS NEARLY 1,800 POUNDS—ABOUT ONE AND A HALF TIMES MORE THAN A HORSE! THAT RIDER IS GOING TO CRUSH ANYONE WHO COMES NEAR HIM ON HIS WAY TO THE FINISH LINE!

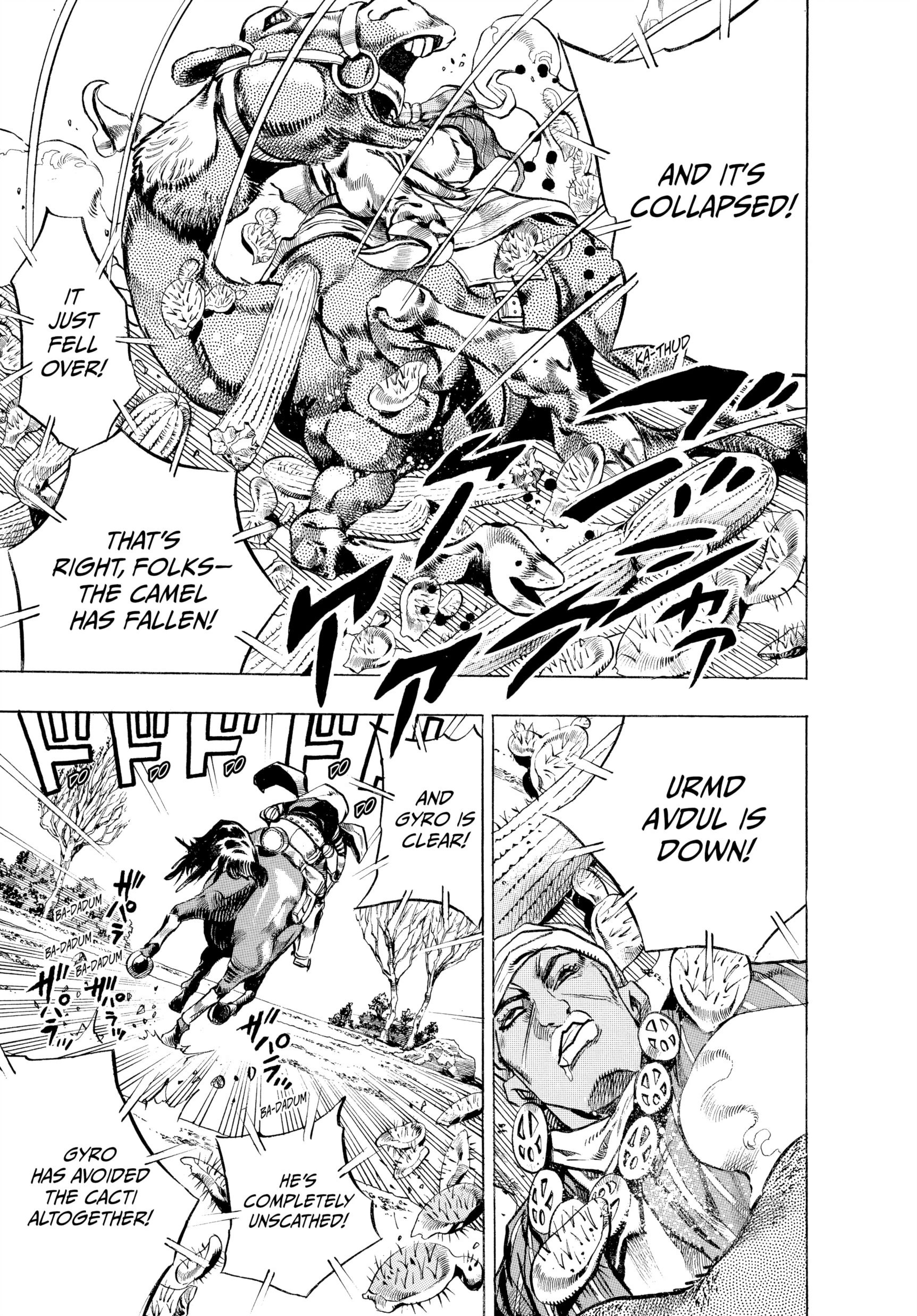

WHAAAM
ドガァーーアァ
ANOTHER HIT!
THMP
DIEGO BRANDO IS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE OPENING! HE'S MOVING UP!
GYRO IS SLOWING DOWN!
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
ザパラッ
ザパラッ
ザパラッ
ザパラッ
SNAP

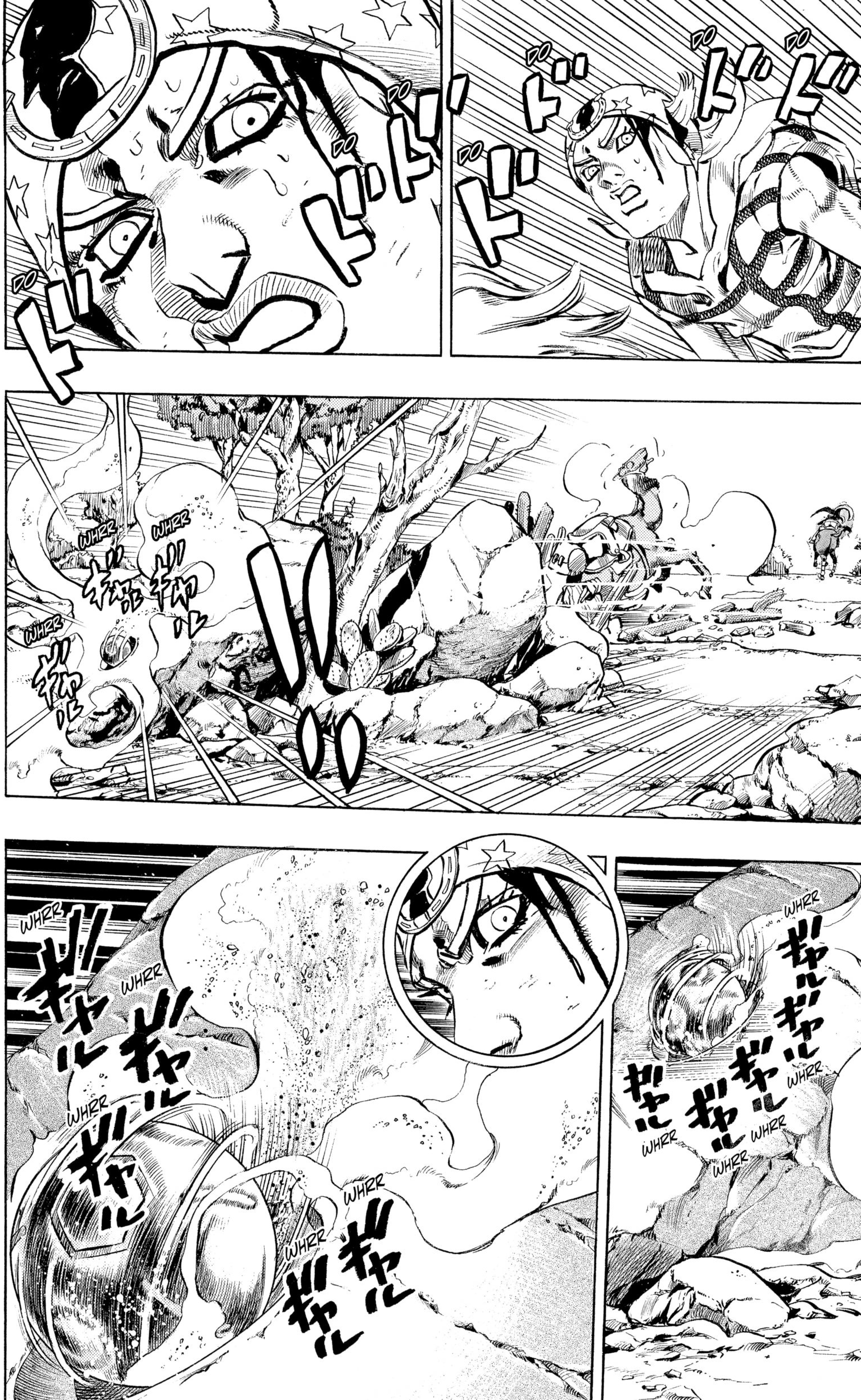
WHRR
WHRR
WHRR
WHRR
WHRR
...
WHRR
WHRR
WHRR
WHRR
WHRR
WHRR
VWSSSH
GWOOO

HE'S GOING INTO THAT GROVE!
THIS IS BAD! HE'S GOING TO GET BOXED IN BY THOSE TREES!
THIS NEXT CHARGE WILL BE YOUR LAST...
SLAAAM
017
UGH!
SKF SKF
636
KRSSSSSH
GYRO'S LEANING FORWARD!
IF ANYONE IS GETTING THAT *TIME BONUS,* IT'S ME. I'M SORRY, BUT THAT'S HOW IT IS.
THE CAMEL IS FORMIDABLE... AND SO IS ITS RIDER, THE DESERT NOMAD URMD AVDUL!

HE'S GOING IN AGAIN! GYRO ZEPPELI CAN'T TAKE ANOTHER HIT! THIS SKIRMISH IS ABOUT TO BE OVER!
BUT WAIT!
KRAK
AVDUL MAKES THE CHARGE...
KRAK
...AND HAS LUNGED RIGHT INTO A CACTUS PATCH!
KRAK


HEE-HAA AWH!
SKSSSSSSSH
DO
DO
DO
DO
DO
COULD HE NOT SEE THE CACTI BEHIND THE TREES?!
THE CAMEL IS TRAMPLING EVEN FARTHER THROUGH THE CACTI!


AND IT'S COLLAPSED!
IT JUST FELL OVER!
KA-THUD
THAT'S RIGHT, FOLKS— THE CAMEL HAS FALLEN!
URMD AVDUL IS DOWN!
DO DO DO DO
AND GYRO IS CLEAR!
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
HE'S COMPLETELY UNSCATHED!
GYRO HAS AVOIDED THE CACTI ALTOGETHER!


DO ド DO ド DO ド DO ド
DO ド DO ド DO ド DO ド
WHRR ギャル
WHRR ギャル
WHRR ギャル
WHRR ギャルギャル
WHRR ギャルギャル
WHRR ギャルギャル
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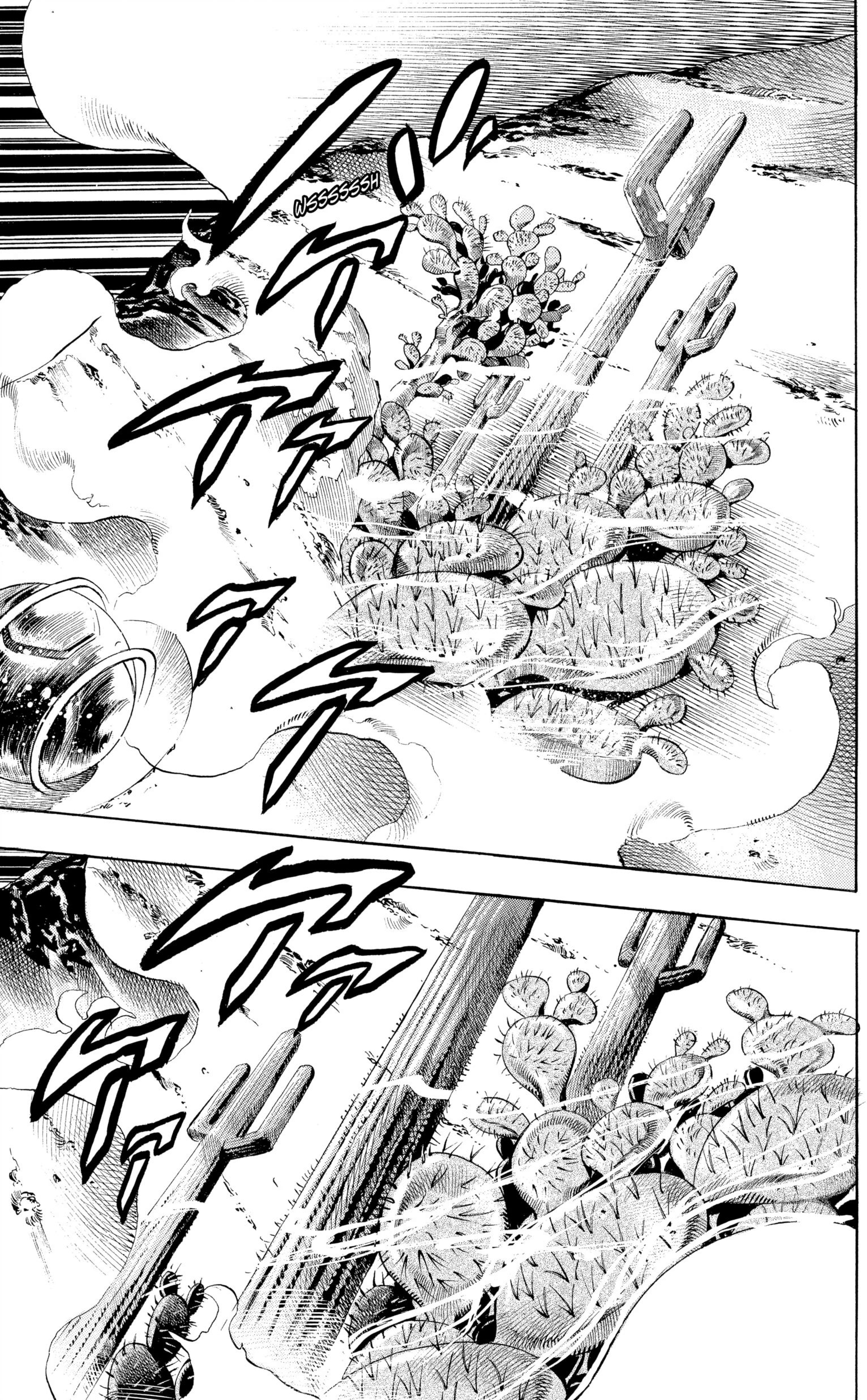
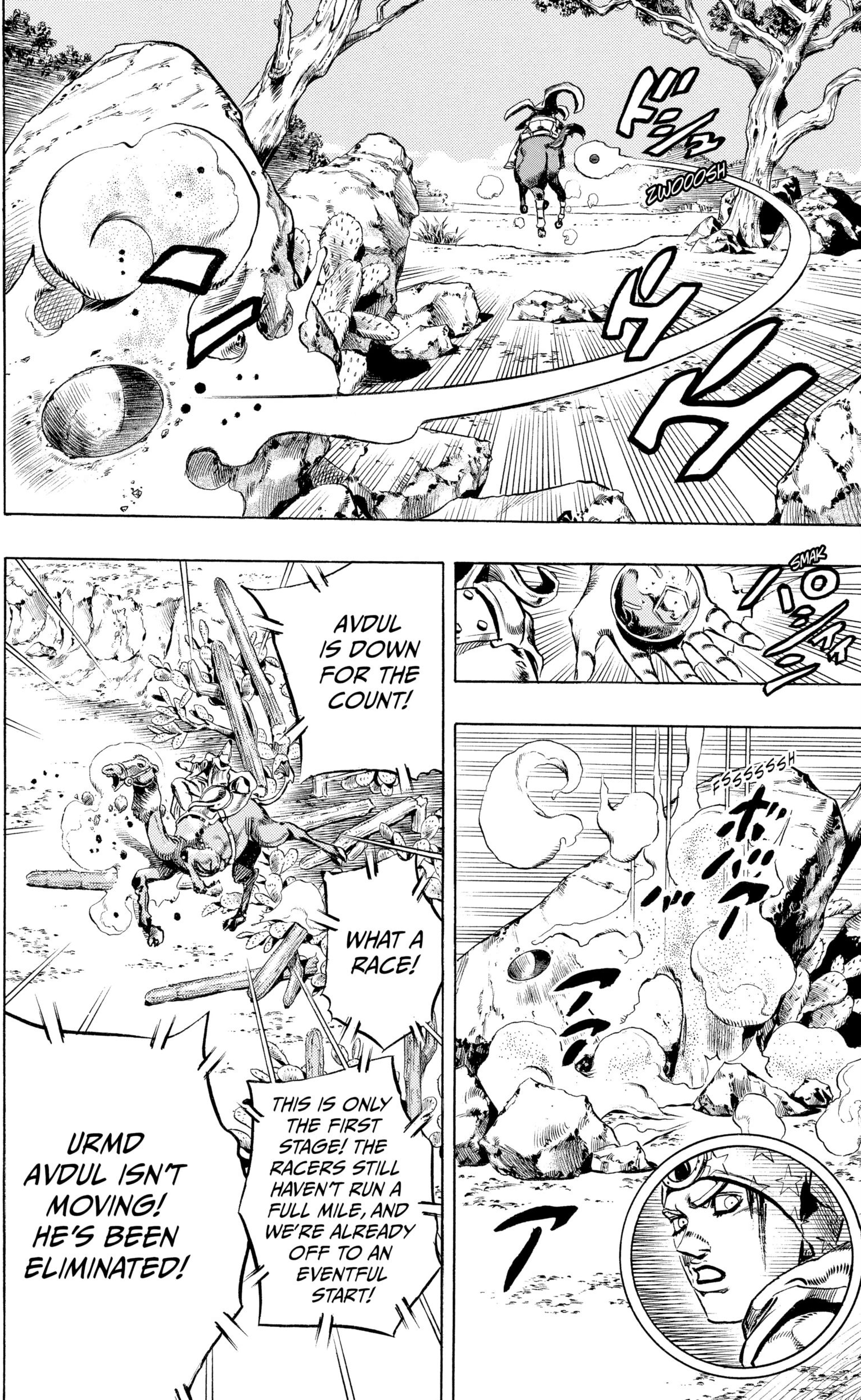
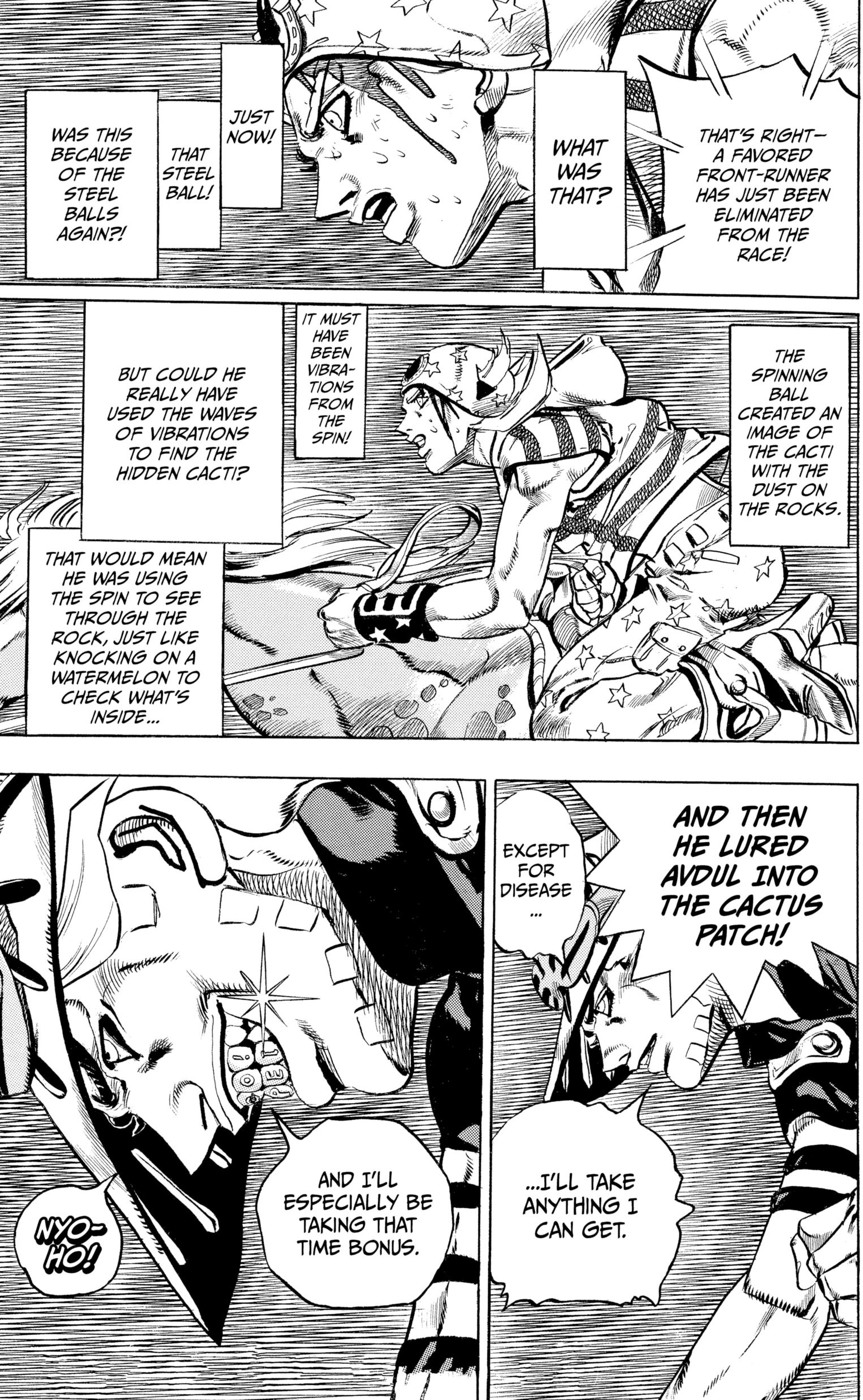
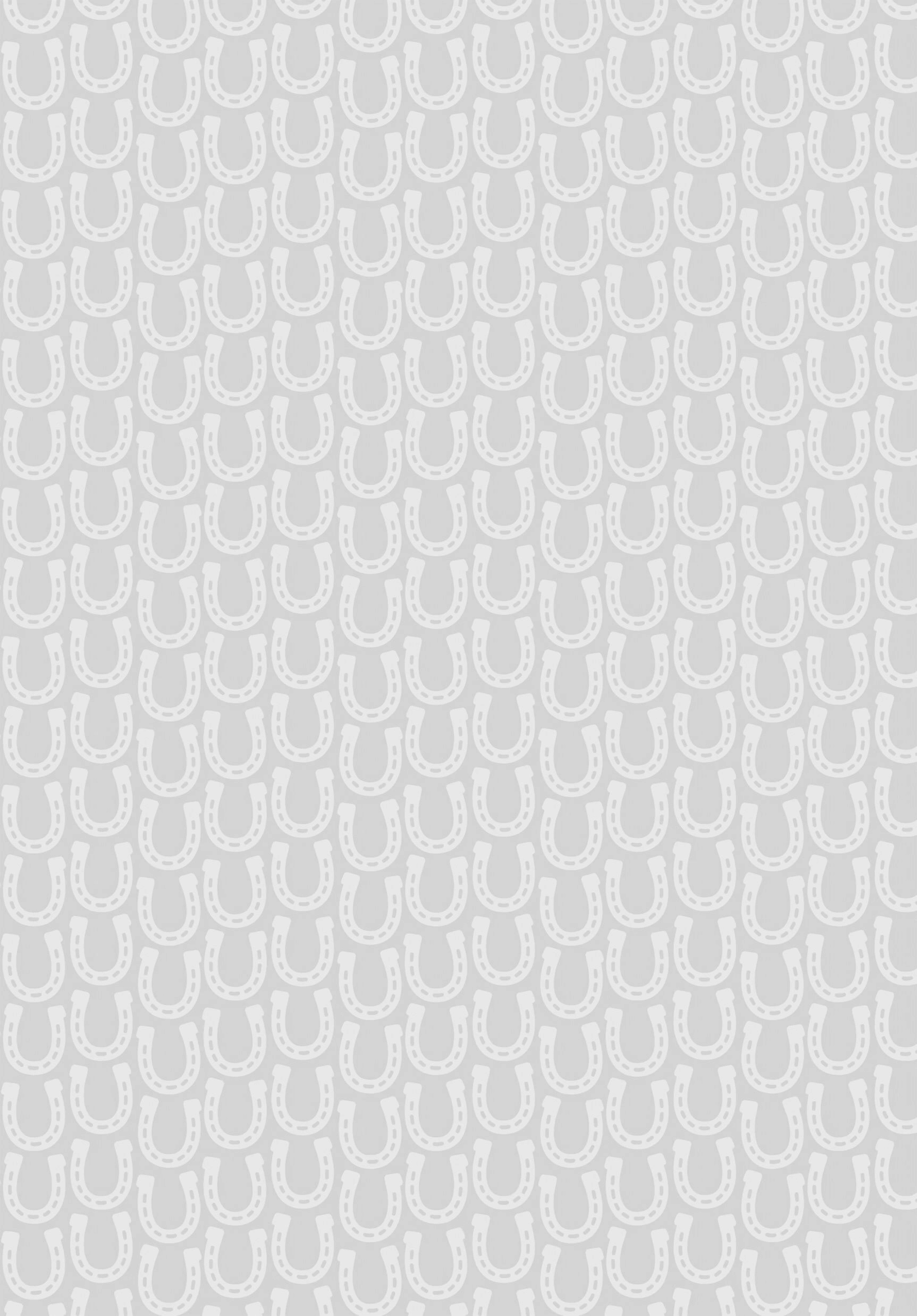
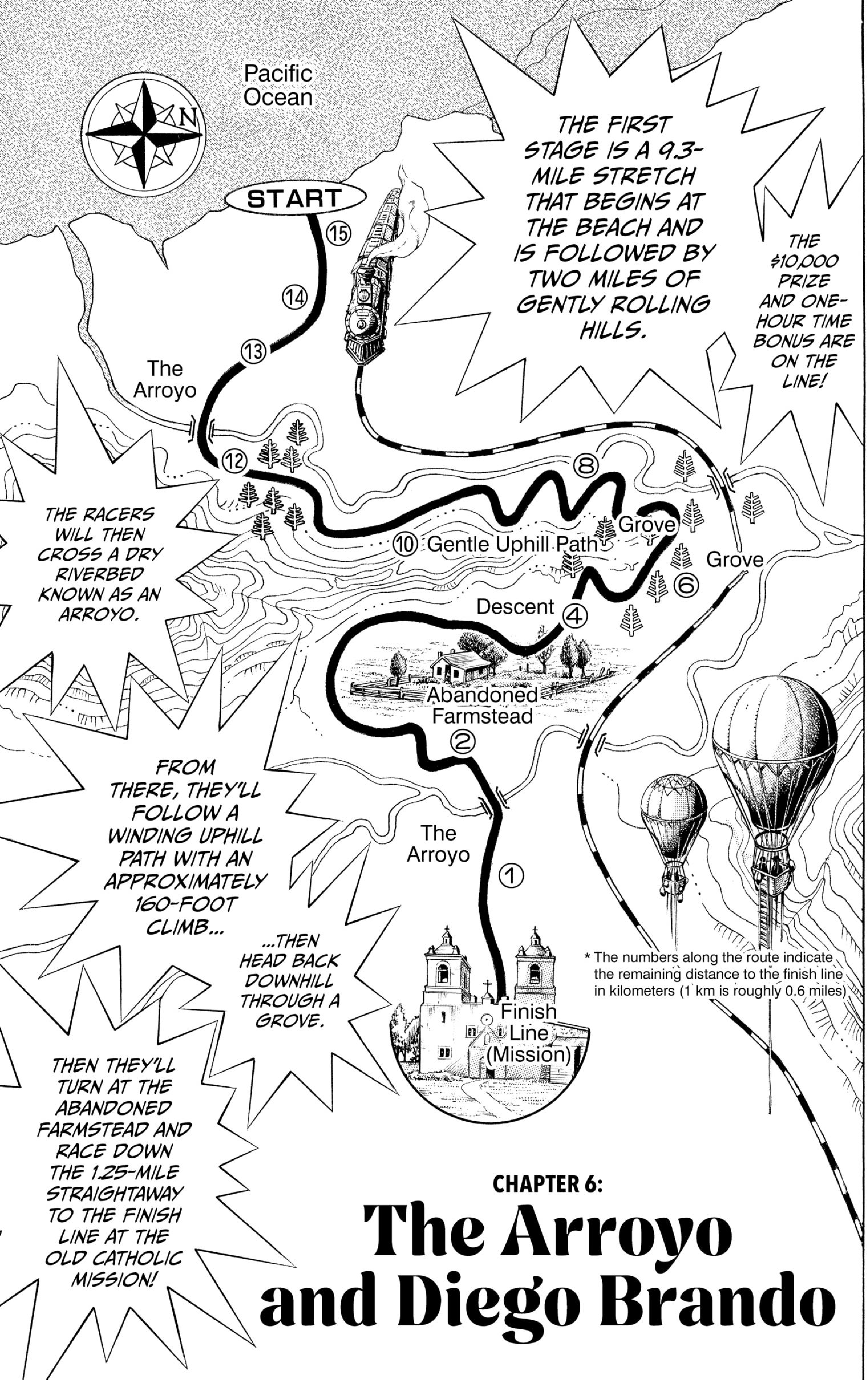
WHRR ギャル


WSSSSSSH
ヴァァァァ
アァアァ


ZWOOOSH
SMAK
FSSSSSSH
AVDUL IS DOWN FOR THE COUNT!
WHAT A RACE!
THIS IS ONLY THE FIRST STAGE! THE RACERS STILL HAVEN'T RUN A FULL MILE, AND WE'RE ALREADY OFF TO AN EVENTFUL START!
URMD AVDUL ISN'T MOVING! HE'S BEEN ELIMINATED!


THAT'S RIGHT— A FAVORED FRONT-RUNNER HAS JUST BEEN ELIMINATED FROM THE RACE!
WHAT WAS THAT?
JUST NOW!
THAT STEEL BALL!
WAS THIS BECAUSE OF THE STEEL BALLS AGAIN?!
THE SPINNING BALL CREATED AN IMAGE OF THE CACTI WITH THE DUST ON THE ROCKS.
IT MUST HAVE BEEN VIBRATIONS FROM THE SPIN!
BUT COULD HE REALLY HAVE USED THE WAVES OF VIBRATIONS TO FIND THE HIDDEN CACTI?
THAT WOULD MEAN HE WAS USING THE SPIN TO SEE THROUGH THE ROCK, JUST LIKE KNOCKING ON A WATERMELON TO CHECK WHAT'S INSIDE...
AND THEN HE LURED AVDUL INTO THE CACTUS PATCH!
EXCEPT FOR DISEASE ...
...I'LL TAKE ANYTHING I CAN GET.
AND I'LL ESPECIALLY BE TAKING THAT TIME BONUS.
NYO-HO!




Pacific Ocean
N
START
⑮
⑭
⑬
The Arroyo
⑫
⑧
Grove
⑩ Gentle Uphill Path
Grove
⑥
Descent ④
Abandoned Farmstead
②
The Arroyo
①
Finish Line (Mission)
THE FIRST STAGE IS A 9.3-MILE STRETCH THAT BEGINS AT THE BEACH AND IS FOLLOWED BY TWO MILES OF GENTLY ROLLING HILLS.
THE $10,000 PRIZE AND ONE-HOUR TIME BONUS ARE ON THE LINE!
THE RACERS WILL THEN CROSS A DRY RIVERBED KNOWN AS AN ARROYO.
FROM THERE, THEY'LL FOLLOW A WINDING UPHILL PATH WITH AN APPROXIMATELY 160-FOOT CLIMB...
...THEN HEAD BACK DOWNHILL THROUGH A GROVE.
THEN THEY'LL TURN AT THE ABANDONED FARMSTEAD AND RACE DOWN THE 1.25-MILE STRAIGHTAWAY TO THE FINISH LINE AT THE OLD CATHOLIC MISSION!

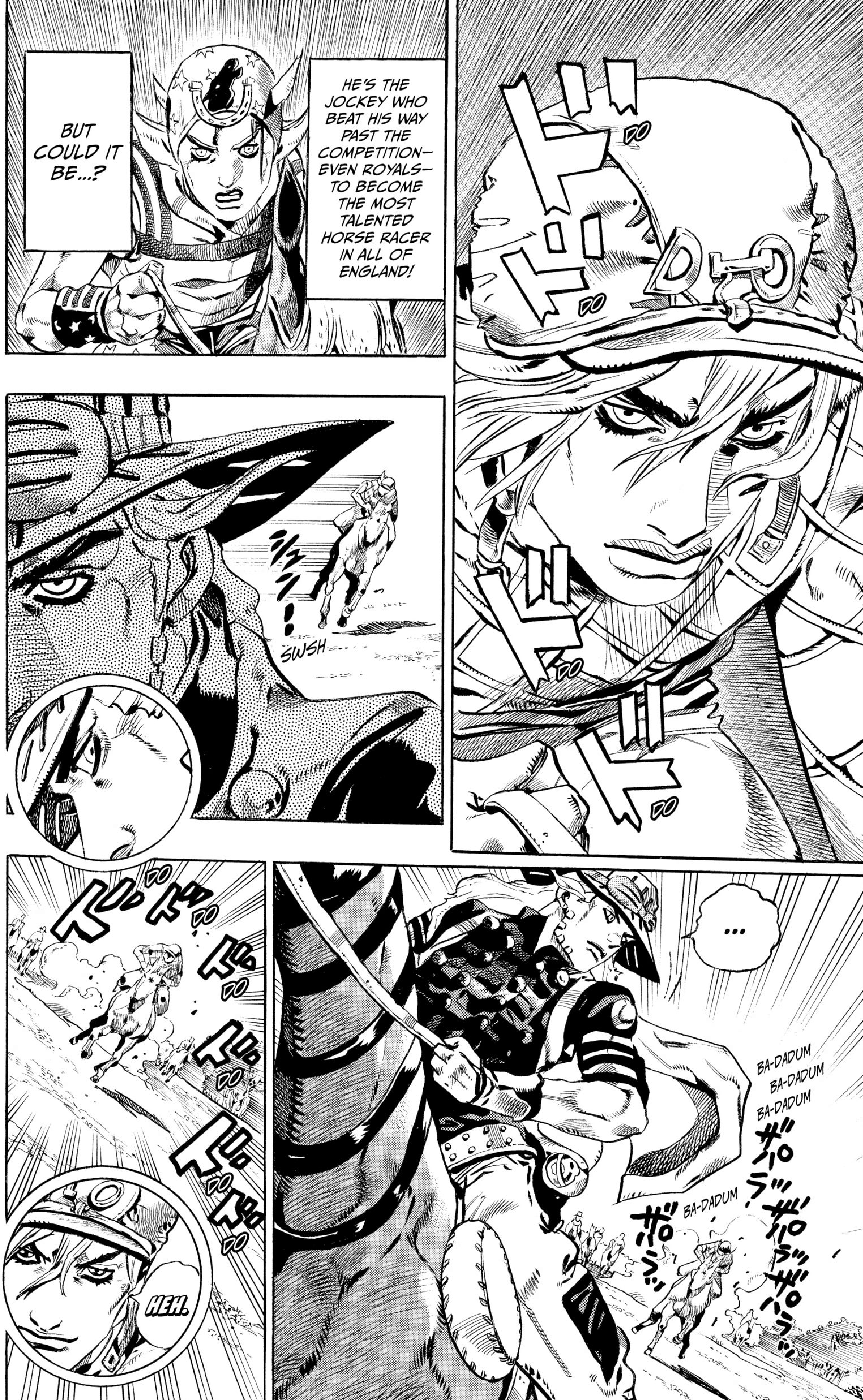
* The numbers along the route indicate the remaining distance to the finish line in kilometers (1 km is roughly 0.6 miles)

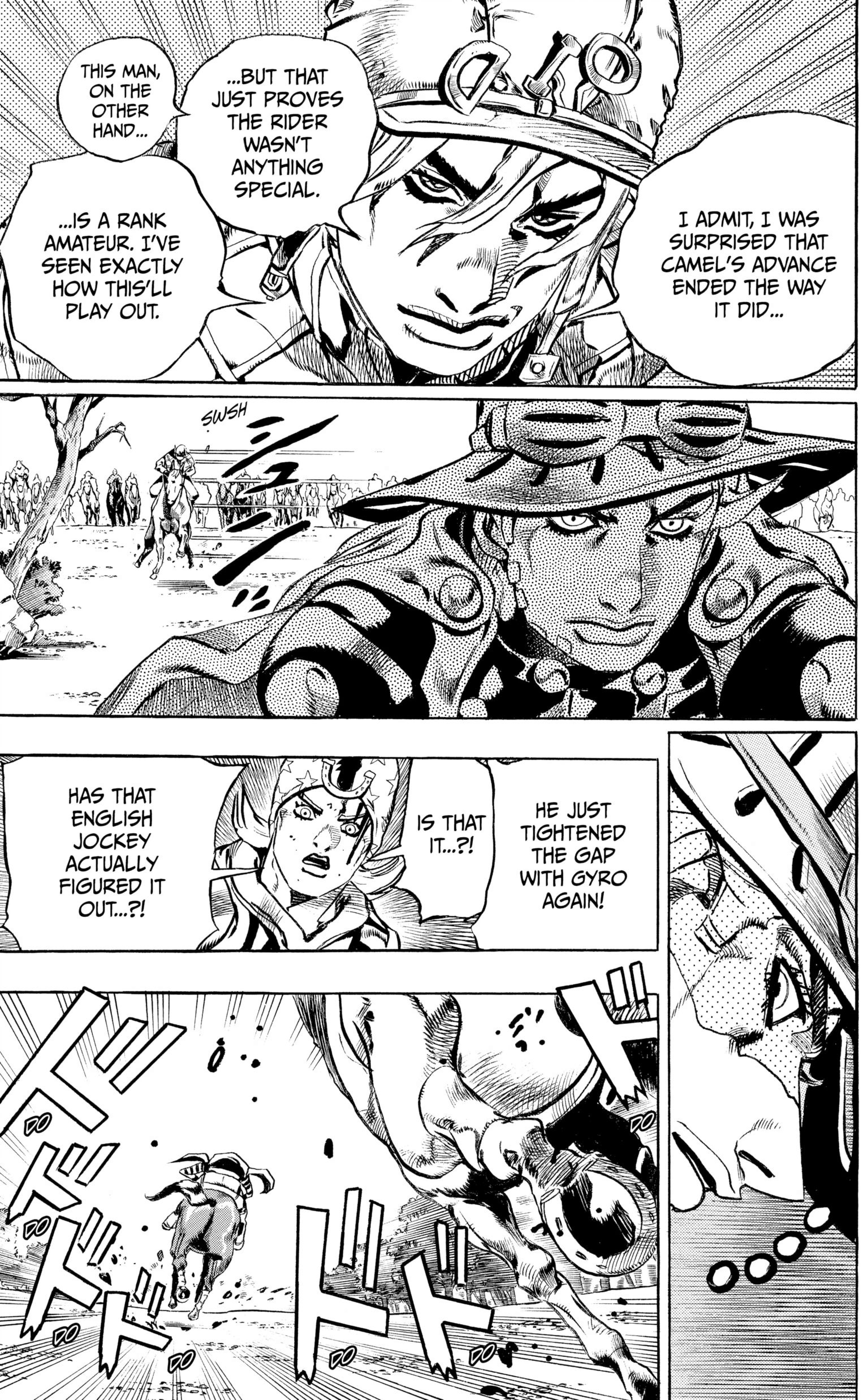
CHAPTER 6:

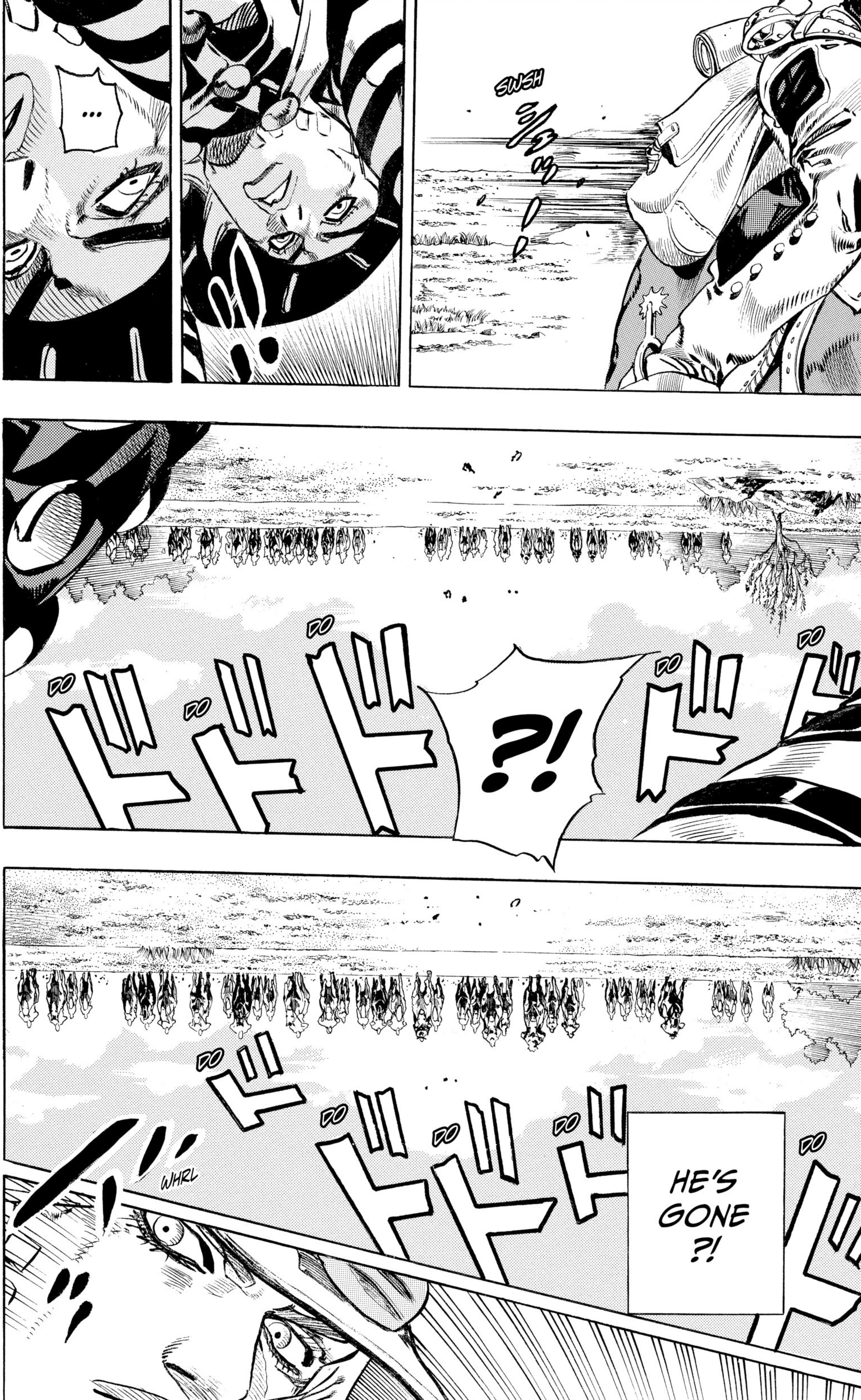
The Arroyo and Diego Brando

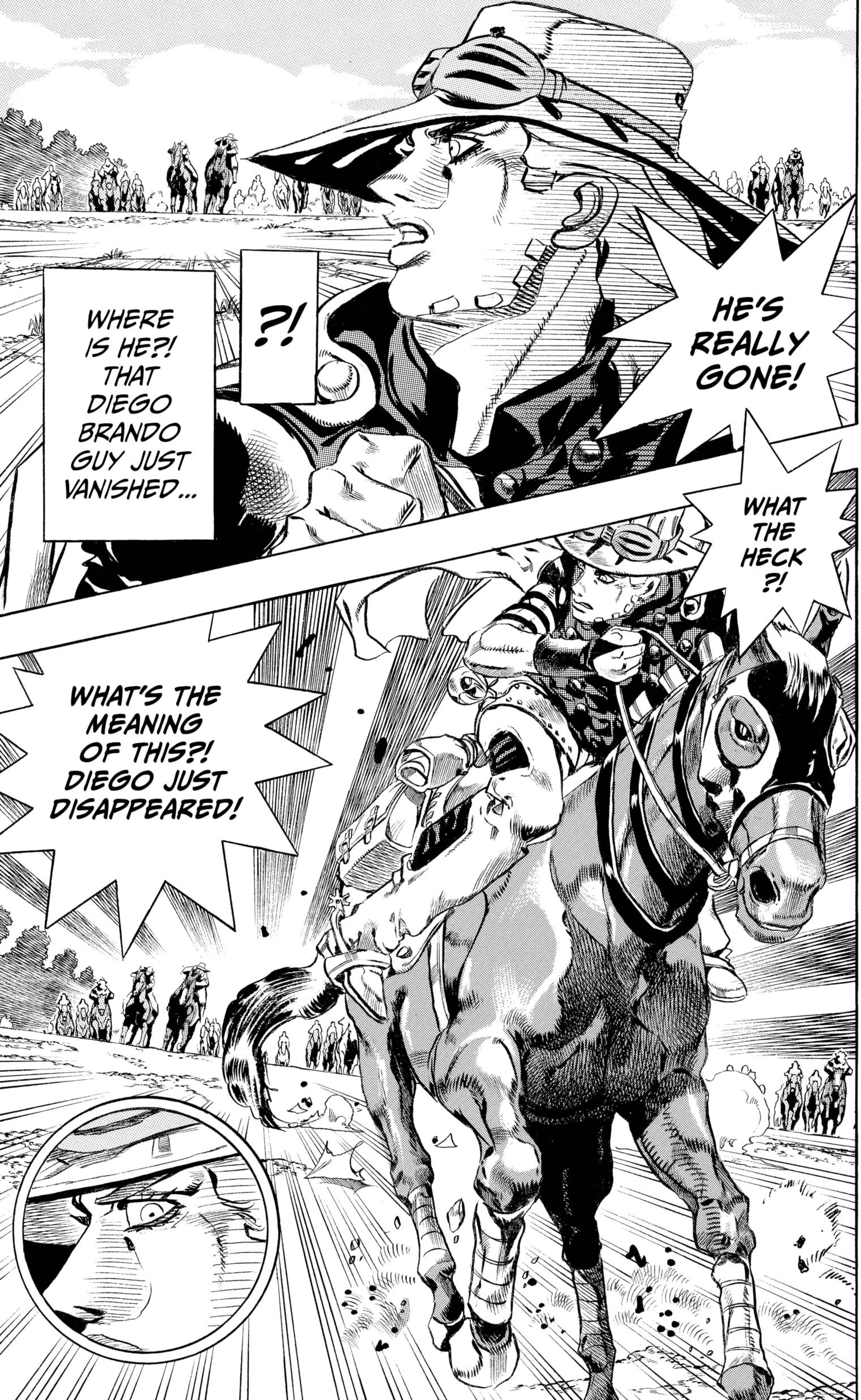
ドド DO
ドド DO
ドド DO
AND ALREADY WE HAVE A HUGE UPSET!
ドド DO
ドド DO
DESERT NOMAD AND TOP CONTENDER URMD AVDUL HAS BEEN ELIMINATED NOT EVEN ONE MILE INTO THE RACE!
ドドド DO
RACER NUMBER B-636, **GYRO ZEPPELI**, HAS SEIZED THE LEAD AND SHOWS NO SIGN OF SLOWING!
ザパラ BA-DADUM
ザパラ BA-DADUM
ザパラッ BA-DADUM
ザパラ BA-DADUM
ド DO
HE'S PULLING AHEAD, HE'S PULLING AHEAD! AND TRAILING HIM BY 20 HORSE LENGTHS IS...
...DIEGO BRANDO, ALSO KNOWN AS DIO! ANOTHER TOP CONTENDER, THIS YOUNG ARISTOCRAT IS THE BEST JOCKEY IN THE ENGLISH HORSE-RACING WORLD! BUT HE CAN'T CATCH UP!
ドド DO
ドド DO

THE GAP BETWEEN GYRO AND THE TRAILING GROUP HAS WIDENED TO MORE THAN 50 LENGTHS!
GYRO ZEPPELI, BURSTING OUT FROM THE PACK LIKE A LONE FUGITIVE ON THE RUN!
HE MAY AS WELL BE TRAVELING SOLO!
ドド DO DO
NO, IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE.
NOT WHEN IT COMES TO **DIEGO BRANDO**.
ドド DO DO
MR. STEEL, THE FOUNDER OF THE COMPETITION, HAS DIRECTED US TO INVESTIGATE THE MYSTERY COMPETITOR'S BACKGROUND.
AND WE'LL HAVE ALL THE DETAILS READY FOR TOMORROW'S PAPER!
ドド DO DO
ス SHF
I'VE BEEN WATCHING HIM FOR A WHILE NOW...
AND HE'S BEEN MOVING ODDLY.
IT'S SLOW, BUT THERE'S NO MISTAKING IT—HE'S **TIGHTENING THE GAP**.
HE FOLLOWS GYRO FROM THE RIGHT... AND THEN CLOSES IN FROM THE LEFT.
HE'S STARTING TO CLOSE IN!

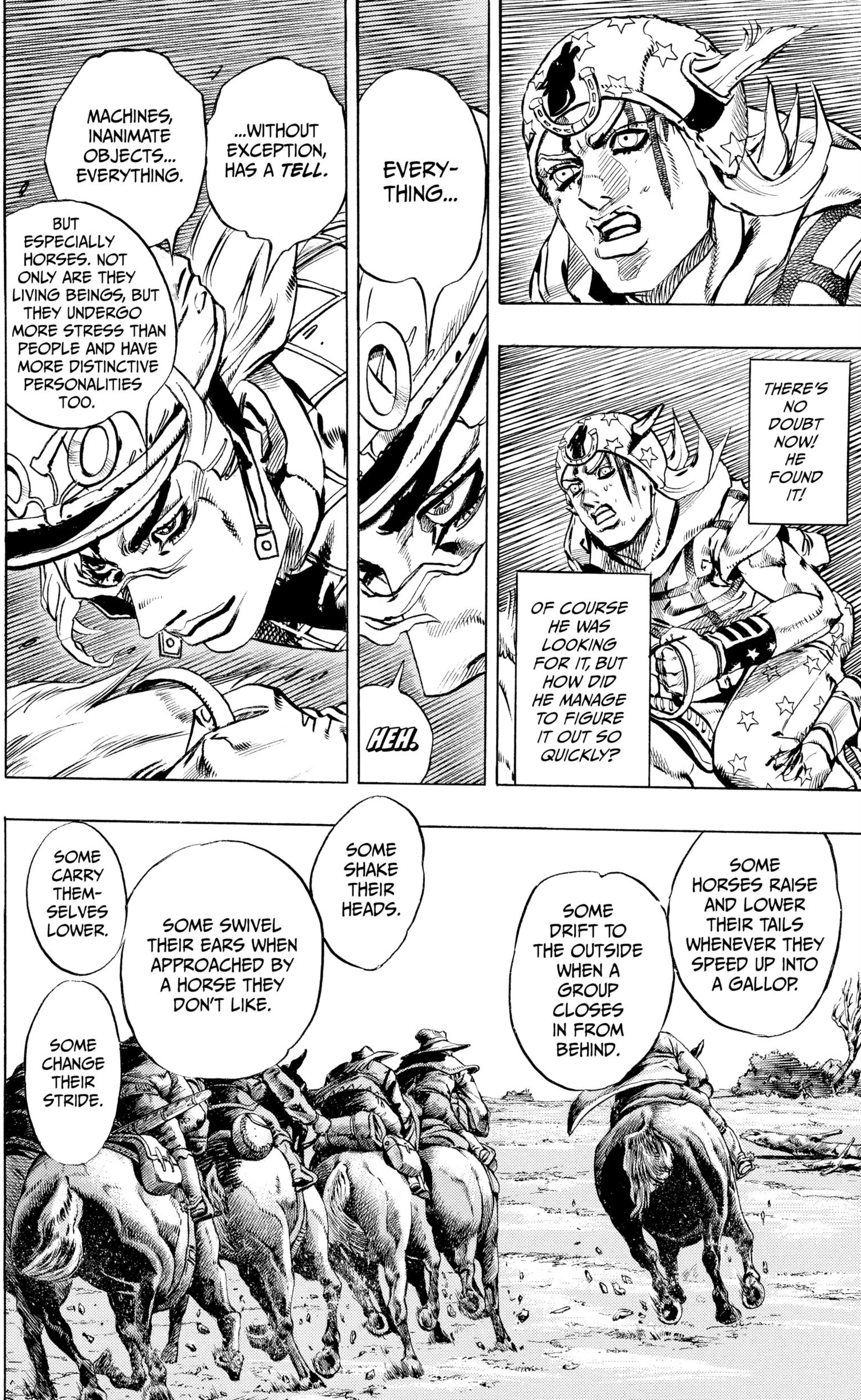

ドドドドドド
DO
DO
DO
DO
DIO
BUT COULD IT BE...?
HE'S THE JOCKEY WHO BEAT HIS WAY PAST THE COMPETITION—EVEN ROYALS—TO BECOME THE MOST TALENTED HORSE RACER IN ALL OF ENGLAND!
シュッ
SWSH
...
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
ザパラッ ザパラッ ザパラッ ザパラッ
ボパラッ
ドドドドドド
DO
DO
DO
DO
DO
DO
HEH.

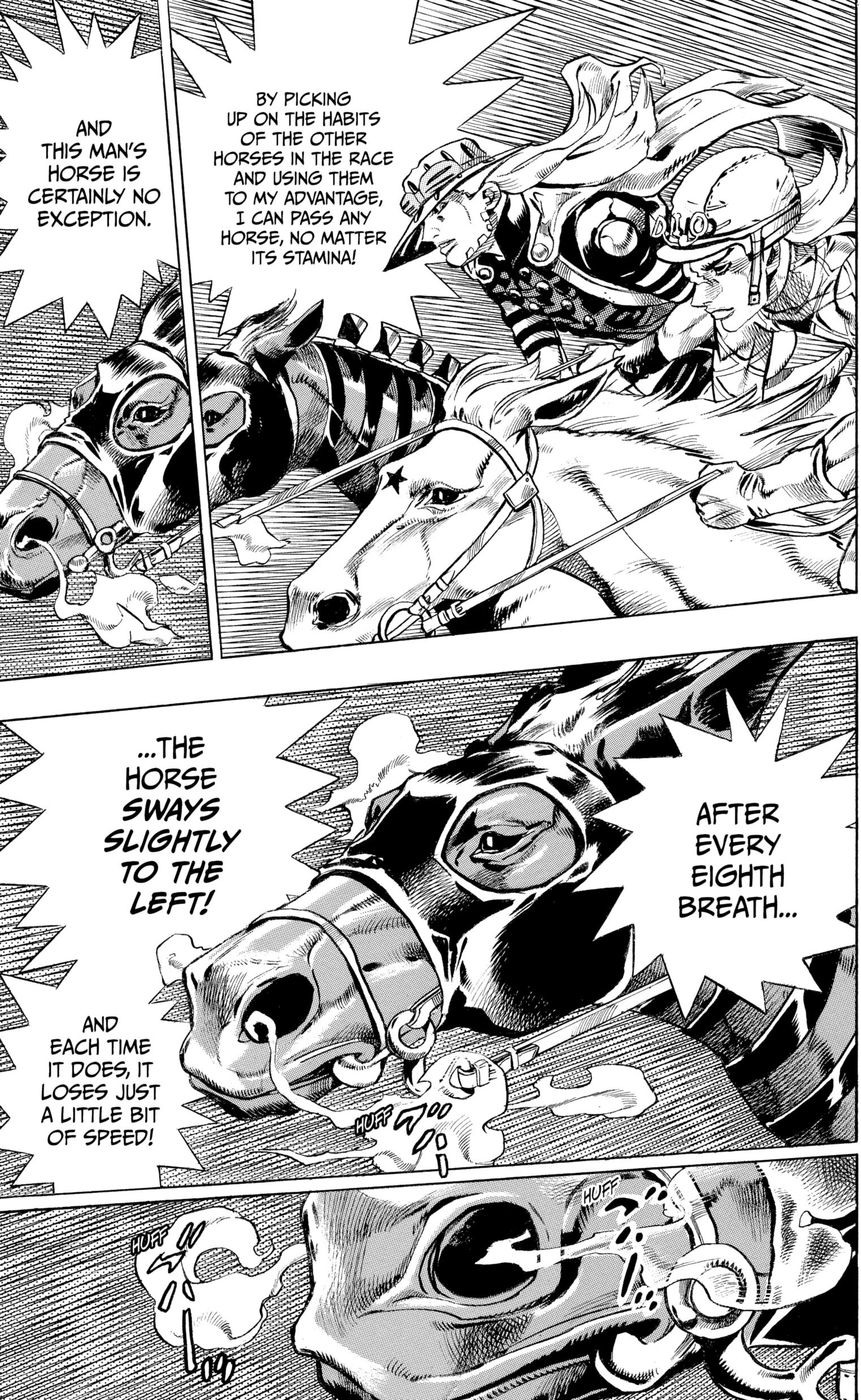

I ADMIT, I WAS SURPRISED THAT CAMEL'S ADVANCE ENDED THE WAY IT DID...
...BUT THAT JUST PROVES THE RIDER WASN'T ANYTHING SPECIAL.
THIS MAN, ON THE OTHER HAND...
...IS A RANK AMATEUR. I'VE SEEN EXACTLY HOW THIS'LL PLAY OUT.
シュン
SWSH
HE JUST TIGHTENED THE GAP WITH GYRO AGAIN!
IS THAT IT...?!
HAS THAT ENGLISH JOCKEY ACTUALLY FIGURED IT OUT...?!
ド
DO
ドド
DO
ドドド
DO
DO
DO
DO
DO


SWSH
...
DO
DO
?!
DO
DO
DO
DO
HE'S GONE ?!
DO
DO
DO
DO
WHRL


HE'S REALLY GONE!
?!
WHERE IS HE?! THAT DIEGO BRANDO GUY JUST VANISHED...
WHAT THE HECK ?!
WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS?! DIEGO JUST DISAPPEARED!

THEY'RE SIDE BY SIDE! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT, FOLKS! THEY'RE SIDE BY SIDE!!
DIO IS GALLOPING ON GYRO ZEPPELI'S LEFT! HE'S ONLY A NECK BEHIND!
HOW CAN THIS BE?!
WHAT SORCERY IS THIS?!
ドドドドド
DO DO DO DO DO
HE MATCHED PACE WITH ZEPPELI RIGHT UNDER OUR NOSES! IT DIDN'T EVEN LOOK LIKE HE WAS SPEEDING UP FROM HERE!
...
ドドドド
DO DO DO DO

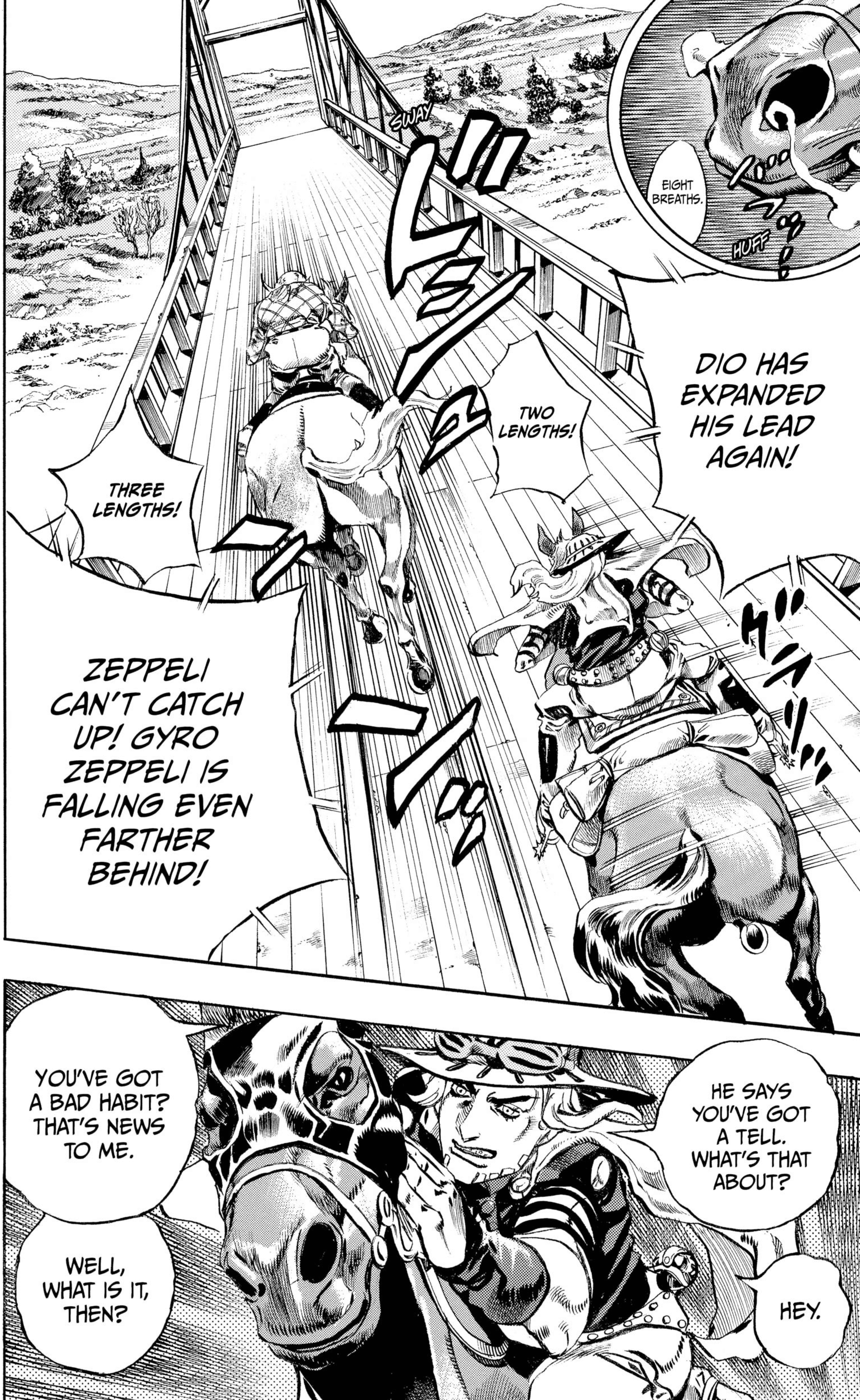

MACHINES, INANIMATE OBJECTS... EVERYTHING.
...WITHOUT EXCEPTION, HAS A *TELL.*
BUT ESPECIALLY HORSES. NOT ONLY ARE THEY LIVING BEINGS, BUT THEY UNDERGO MORE STRESS THAN PEOPLE AND HAVE MORE DISTINCTIVE PERSONALITIES TOO.
EVERYTHING...
HEH.
THERE'S NO DOUBT NOW! HE FOUND IT!
OF COURSE HE WAS LOOKING FOR IT, BUT HOW DID HE MANAGE TO FIGURE IT OUT SO QUICKLY?
SOME CARRY THEMSELVES LOWER.
SOME SWIVEL THEIR EARS WHEN APPROACHED BY A HORSE THEY DON'T LIKE.
SOME SHAKE THEIR HEADS.
SOME CHANGE THEIR STRIDE.
SOME DRIFT TO THE OUTSIDE WHEN A GROUP CLOSES IN FROM BEHIND.
SOME HORSES RAISE AND LOWER THEIR TAILS WHENEVER THEY SPEED UP INTO A GALLOP.

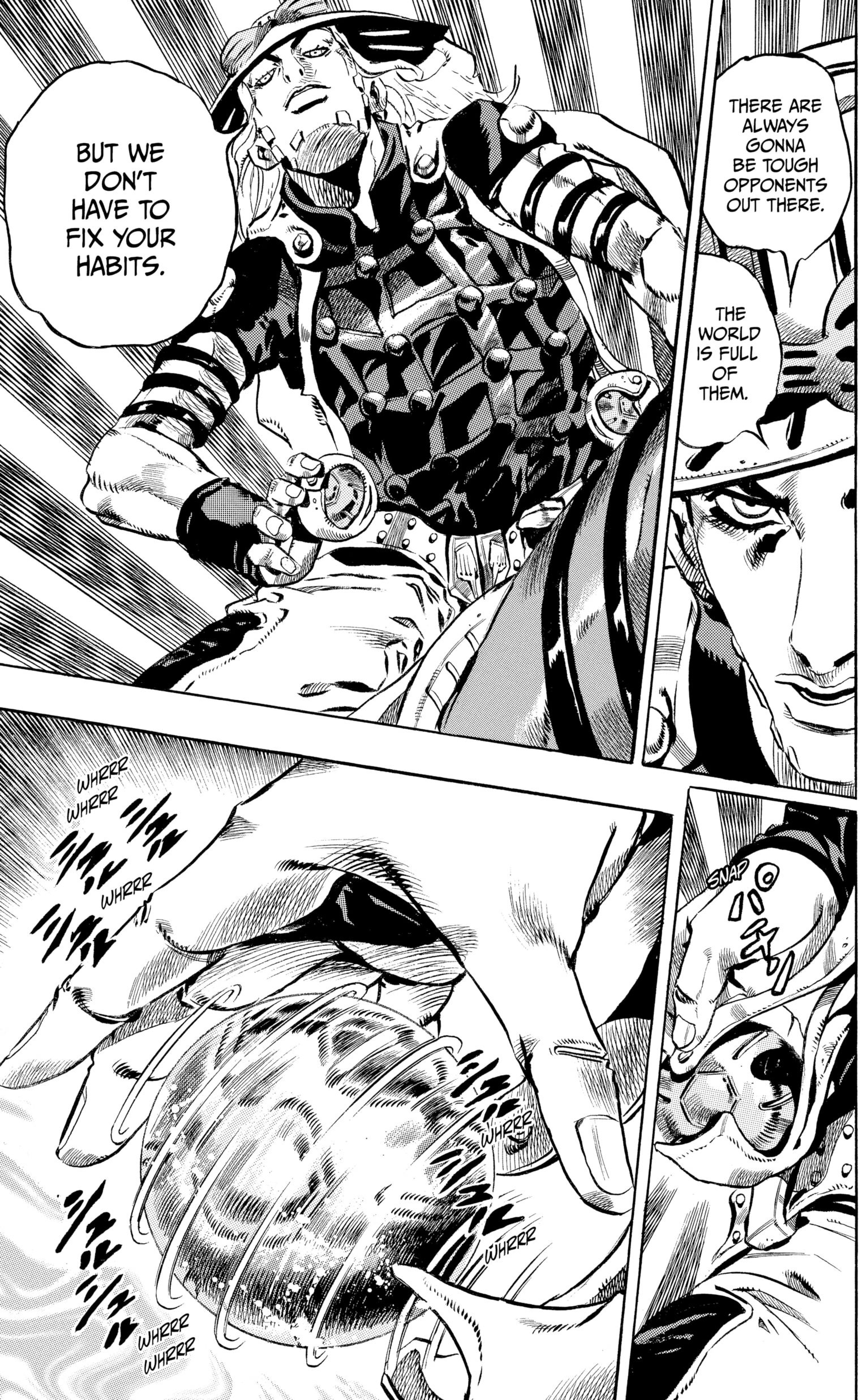

BY PICKING UP ON THE HABITS OF THE OTHER HORSES IN THE RACE AND USING THEM TO MY ADVANTAGE, I CAN PASS ANY HORSE, NO MATTER ITS STAMINA!
AND THIS MAN'S HORSE IS CERTAINLY NO EXCEPTION.
AFTER EVERY EIGHTH BREATH...
...THE HORSE SWAYS SLIGHTLY TO THE LEFT!
HUFF
AND EACH TIME IT DOES, IT LOSES JUST A LITTLE BIT OF SPEED!
HUFF
HUFF

THREE BREATHS.
HUFF
FOUR.
HUFF
FIVE.
HUFF
SIX.
HUFF
SEVEN.
HUFF
AND SWAY LEFT.
SWAY
VWOOOSH
HE'S PASSED HIM! THERE YOU HAVE IT, FOLKS! DIO JUST PASSED ZEPPELI!
01
IN OTHER WORDS ...
...IF I ONLY SPEED UP WHEN HIS HORSE SWAYS, MY STEED CAN CATCH UP WITH HIS WITHOUT TIRING FROM USELESS EFFORT.
DIEGO BRANDO LEADS BY A NECK!

DIO IS IN THE LEAD!
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
DIO FIGURED OUT THE OTHER HORSE'S TELL!
DOES GYRO KNOW?!
NOT THAT IT WOULD MATTER.
EVEN IF GYRO TRIED TO CORRECT THE HABIT, SOME OTHER VULNERABILITY WOULD ONLY SPRING UP IN ITS PLACE!
PEOPLE AND HORSES ARE THE SAME THAT WAY.
AND NOW THAT GYRO HAS BEEN OVERTAKEN...
DO
DO
DO
DO
...HE WON'T BE ABLE TO TAKE BACK THE LEAD!
DIO WILL JUST KEEP INCREASING THE GAP BIT BY BIT!
HUFF
THREE BREATHS.
FOUR.
FIVE.
HUFF
HUFF
SIX.
SEVEN.
HUFF
HUFF
!!
UWOOOSH

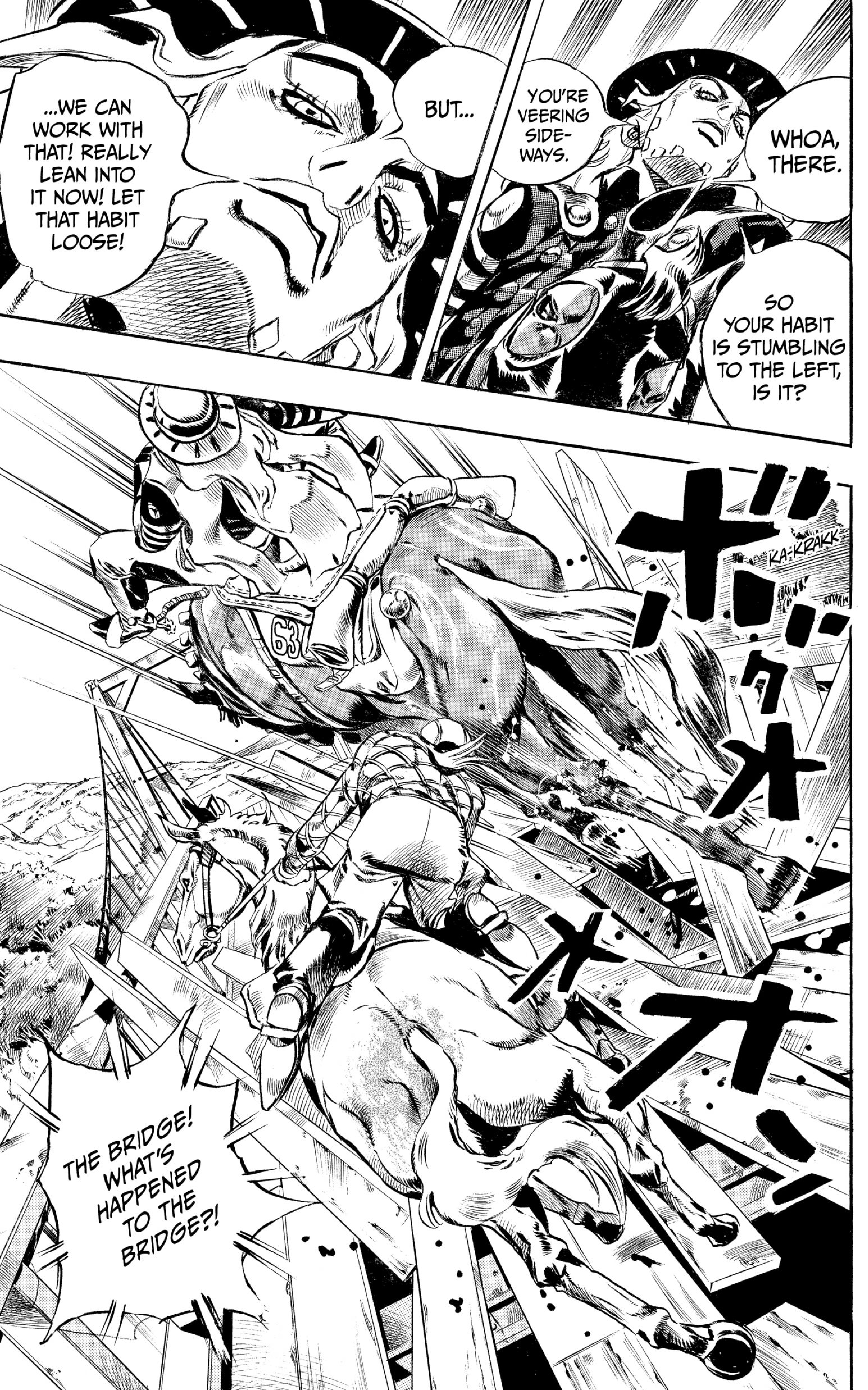
I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT I'M WITNESSING! TO MY EYES, GYRO LOOKS LIKE HE'S THE ONE ACCELERATING!
BUT DIO KEEPS ON GAINING GROUND, SEEMINGLY WITHOUT EFFORT! HE'S A NATURAL! IT LOOKS LIKE NOTHING SHORT OF WITCHCRAFT!
THE GAP HAS WIDENED TO A FULL HORSE LENGTH!
...
HEY. WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?
WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?
GLANCE
HEH.
IT'S A PROFESSIONAL TECHNIQUE. YOU MIGHT KNOW THAT IF YOU DIDN'T RACE LIKE A COUNTRY BUMPKIN.
GO ON BACK WITH THE OTHERS NOW.
...
WAIT... IS THIS ABOUT HORSE HABITS?
YOU'RE SAYING MY HORSE HAS A TELL?
ARE YOU KIDDING ME?
EVEN IF I TOLD YOU, WHAT GOOD WOULD IT DO YOU?
MANNERISMS LIKE THAT CAN'T BE FIXED... JUST LIKE FATE.
THEY'VE PASSED THE NEXT MARKER WITH 7.5 MILES TO GO! THEY'RE AT THE DRIED-UP RIVERBED! DIEGO BRANDO, ALSO KNOWN AS DIO, WILL BE THE FIRST TO CROSS THE BRIDGE!
DO DO DO DO DO DO
12
HUFF HUFF HUFF


EIGHT BREATHS.
HUFF
SWAY
DIO HAS EXPANDED HIS LEAD AGAIN!
TWO LENGTHS!
THREE LENGTHS!
ZEPPELI CAN'T CATCH UP! GYRO ZEPPELI IS FALLING EVEN FARTHER BEHIND!
HE SAYS YOU'VE GOT A TELL. WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?
YOU'VE GOT A BAD HABIT? THAT'S NEWS TO ME.
HEY.
WELL, WHAT IS IT, THEN?

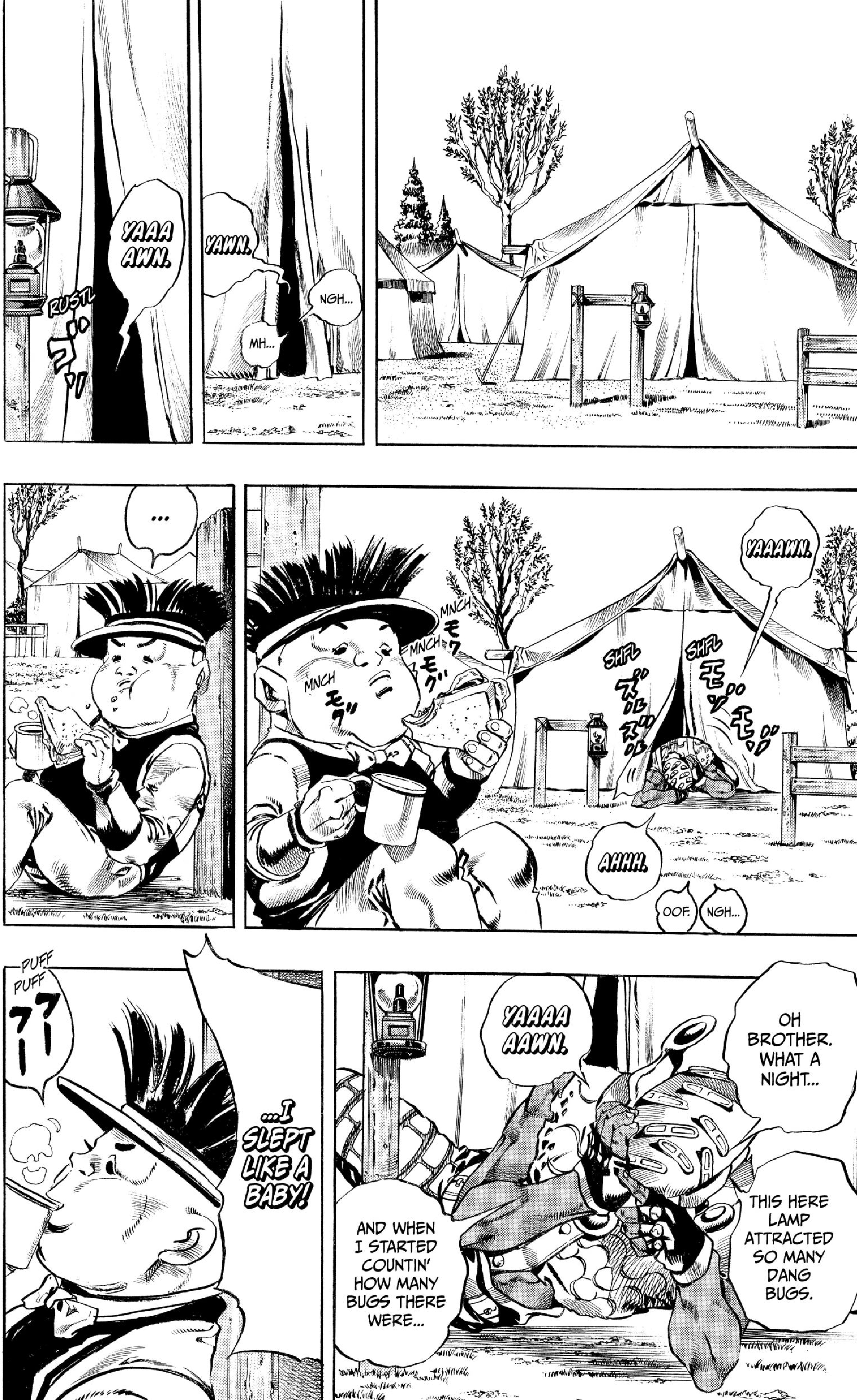

THERE ARE ALWAYS GONNA BE TOUGH OPPONENTS OUT THERE.
THE WORLD IS FULL OF THEM.
BUT WE DON'T HAVE TO FIX YOUR HABITS.
SNAP
WHRRR WHRRR
WHRRR
WHRRR
WHRRR
WHRRR WHRRR

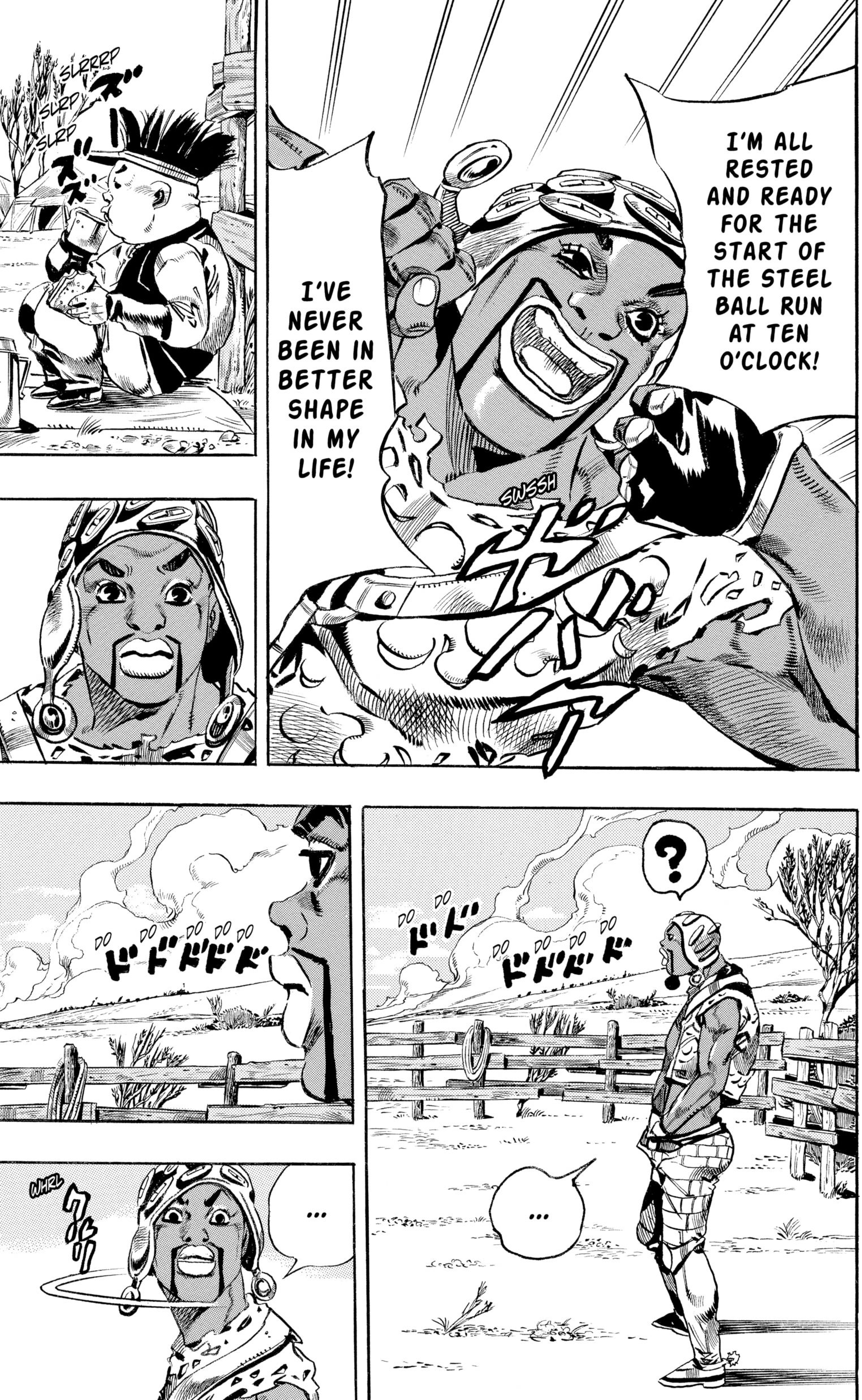
SWRL SWRL
SWRL SWRL SWRL
EMBRACE THAT OLD HABIT... AND RUN!
SWRL SWRL SWRL SWRL SWRL SWRL
ZWOOOM
KRAK
KRAK
KRAK

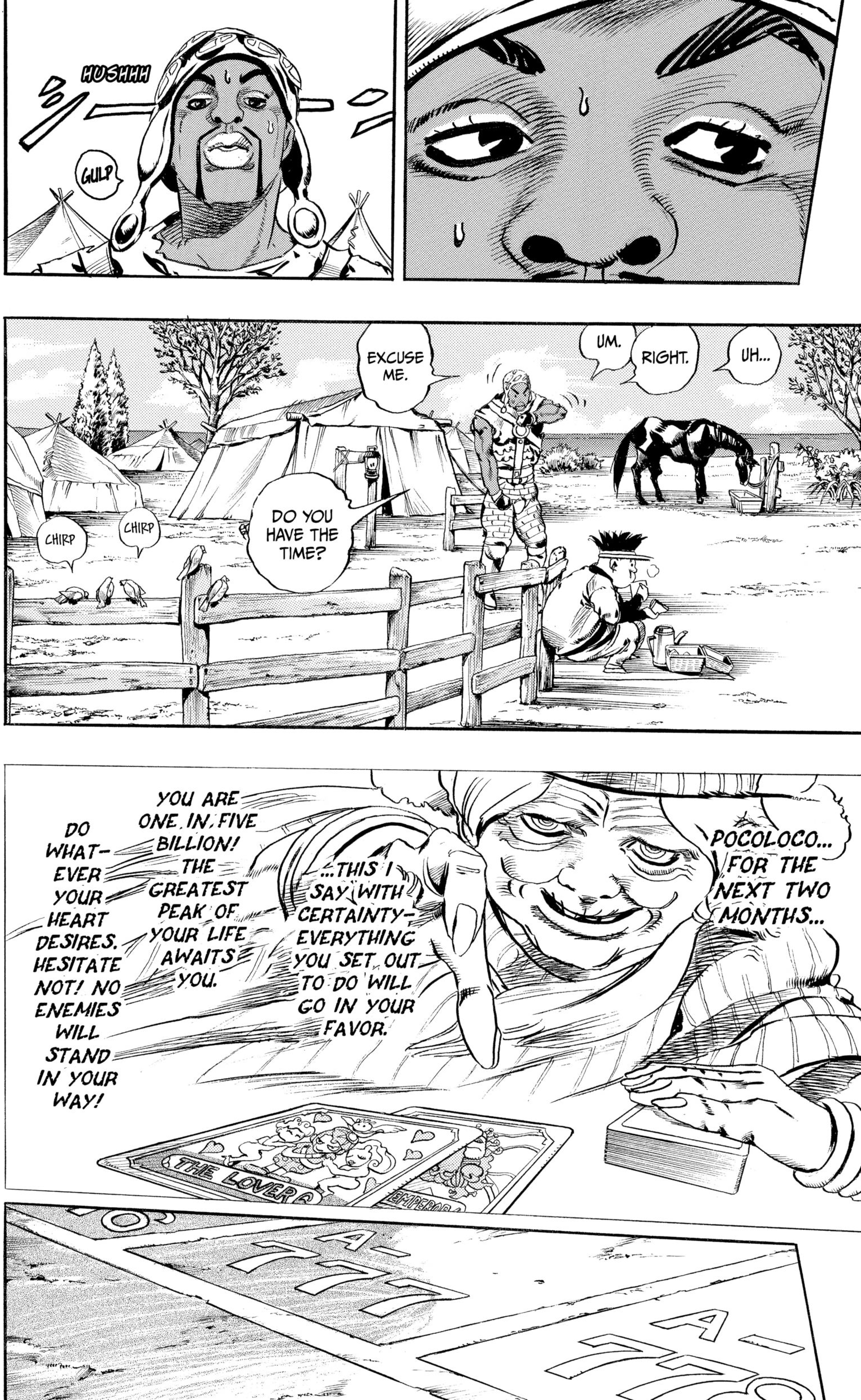
VWOOOOSH
RATTL
RATTL
RATTL

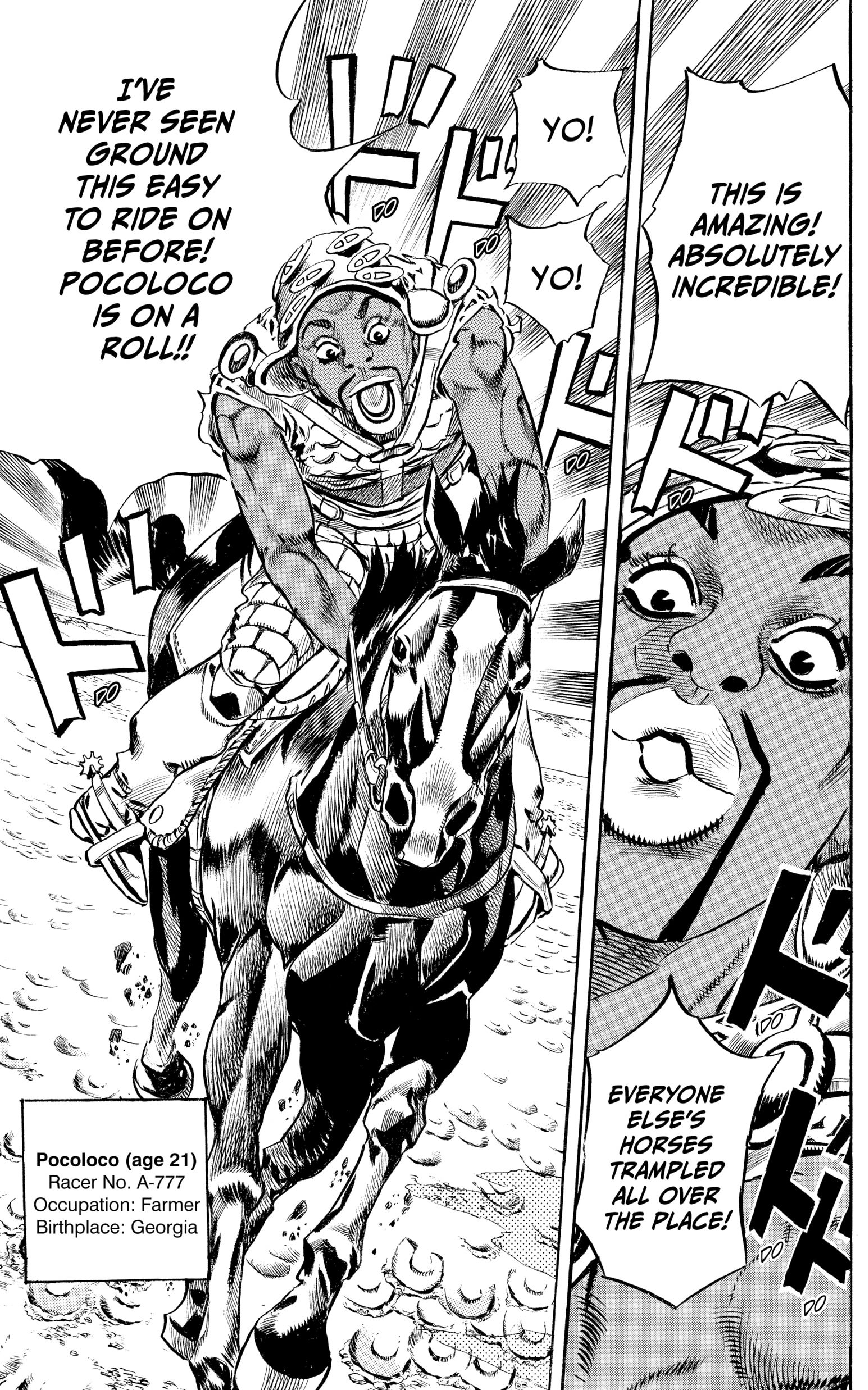

WHOA, THERE.
SO YOUR HABIT IS STUMBLING TO THE LEFT, IS IT?
YOU'RE VEERING SIDEWAYS.
BUT...
...WE CAN WORK WITH THAT! REALLY LEAN INTO IT NOW! LET THAT HABIT LOOSE!
ボグオオオン
KA-KRAKK
THE BRIDGE! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE BRIDGE?!

KRAK
HOW CAN THIS BE? THE BRIDGE IS COLLAPSING!
DIO ISN'T CROSSING! THE ENGLISH RIDER HESITATED!
DIO CAN-NOT CROSS!
GYRO ZEPPELI CHARGES RECKLESSLY ACROSS!
THE REST OF THE RACERS HAVE REACHED THE ARROYO!
THE TRAILING GROUP OF 3,800 ARE CROSSING THE DRY RIVERBED!
DIO CAN'T CROSS THE BRIDGE AND IS RAPIDLY LOSING TIME! WHAT A SETBACK!
DO
DIO WILL HAVE TO DOUBLE BACK ACROSS THE BRIDGE AND CROSS THE RIVERBED!
GRR...
KRAK
THAT BASTARD...
AH...!
DO
HE USED THOSE STEEL BALLS AGAIN!
THOSE MYSTERIOUS SPINNING BALLS SET OFF HIS HORSE'S SIMPLE QUIRK LIKE A LIT STICK OF DYNAMITE!
JUST LIKE WITH MY LEGS!
DO

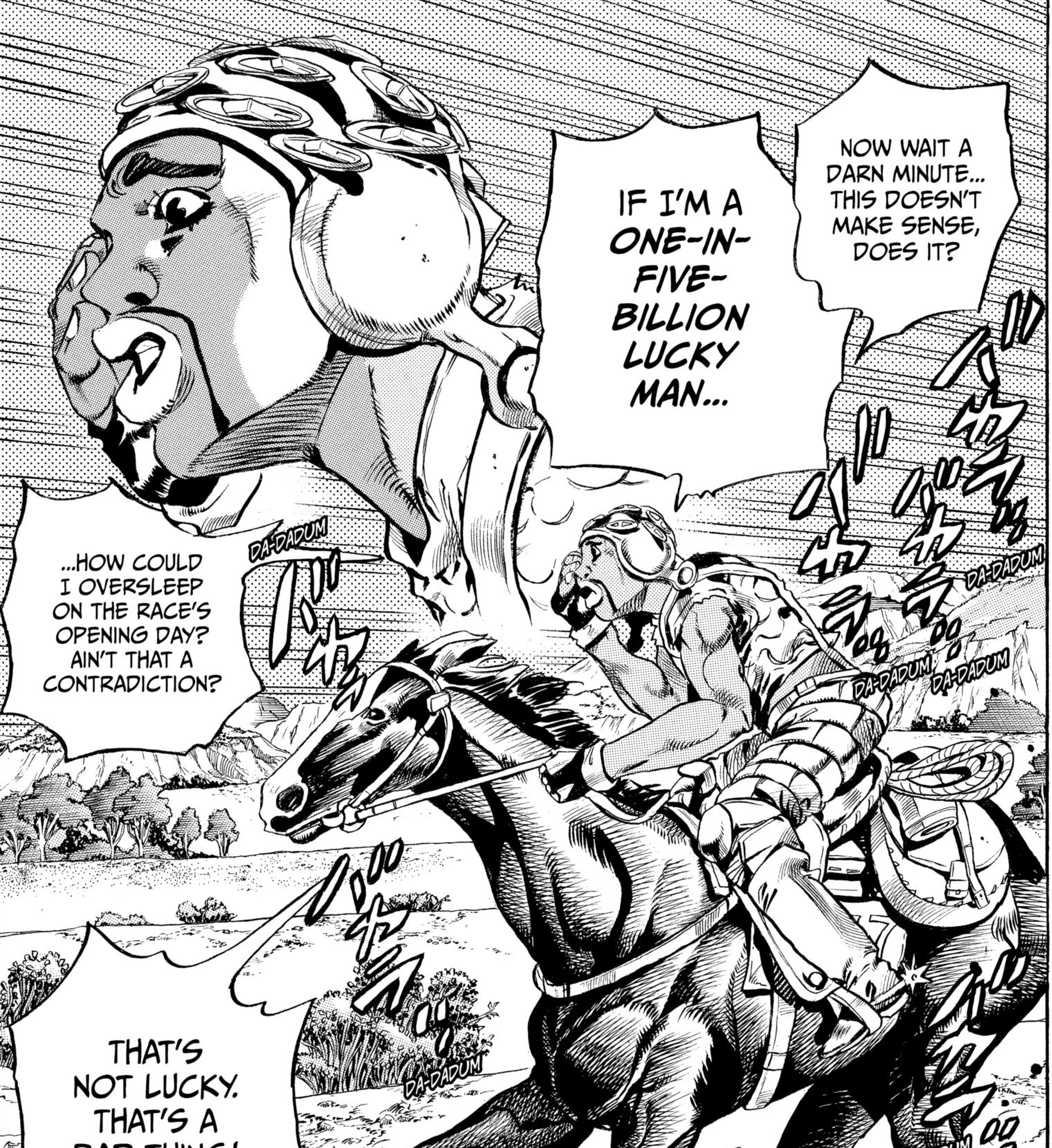

YAWN.
NGH...
MH...
YAAAAWN.
RUSTL
ゴソ
YAAAWN.
SHFL
ズルズル
SHFL
モゾモゾ
AHHH.
OOF.
NGH...
MNCH
モグ
MNCH
モグ
MNCH
モグ
...
YAAAAAAWN.
OH BROTHER. WHAT A NIGHT...
THIS HERE LAMP ATTRACTED SO MANY DANG BUGS.
AND WHEN I STARTED COUNTIN' HOW MANY BUGS THERE WERE...
PUFF PUFF
フーフー
...I SLEPT LIKE A BABY!


I'M ALL RESTED AND READY FOR THE START OF THE STEEL BALL RUN AT TEN O'CLOCK!
I'VE NEVER BEEN IN BETTER SHAPE IN MY LIFE!
SWSSH
SLRRRP
SLRP
SLRP
ズズ
ズズ
?
DO DO
ドド
DO DO DO DO DO
ドドドドド
...
DO DO DO DO DO
ドドドドド
WHRL
クルッ
...


HUSHHH
GULP
UH...
RIGHT.
UM.
EXCUSE ME.
DO YOU HAVE THE TIME?
CHIRP
CHIRP
POCOLOCO... FOR THE NEXT TWO MONTHS...
...THIS I SAY WITH CERTAINTY—EVERYTHING YOU SET OUT TO DO WILL GO IN YOUR FAVOR.
YOU ARE ONE IN FIVE BILLION! THE GREATEST PEAK OF YOUR LIFE AWAITS YOU.
DO WHATEVER YOUR HEART DESIRES. HESITATE NOT! NO ENEMIES WILL STAND IN YOUR WAY!
THE LOVERS
EMPEROR
A-777
A-77


THIS IS AMAZING! ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE!
EVERYONE ELSE'S HORSES TRAMPLED ALL OVER THE PLACE!
ドドド
DO
YO!
YO!
I'VE NEVER SEEN GROUND THIS EASY TO RIDE ON BEFORE! POCOLOCO IS ON A ROLL!!
ドドド
DO

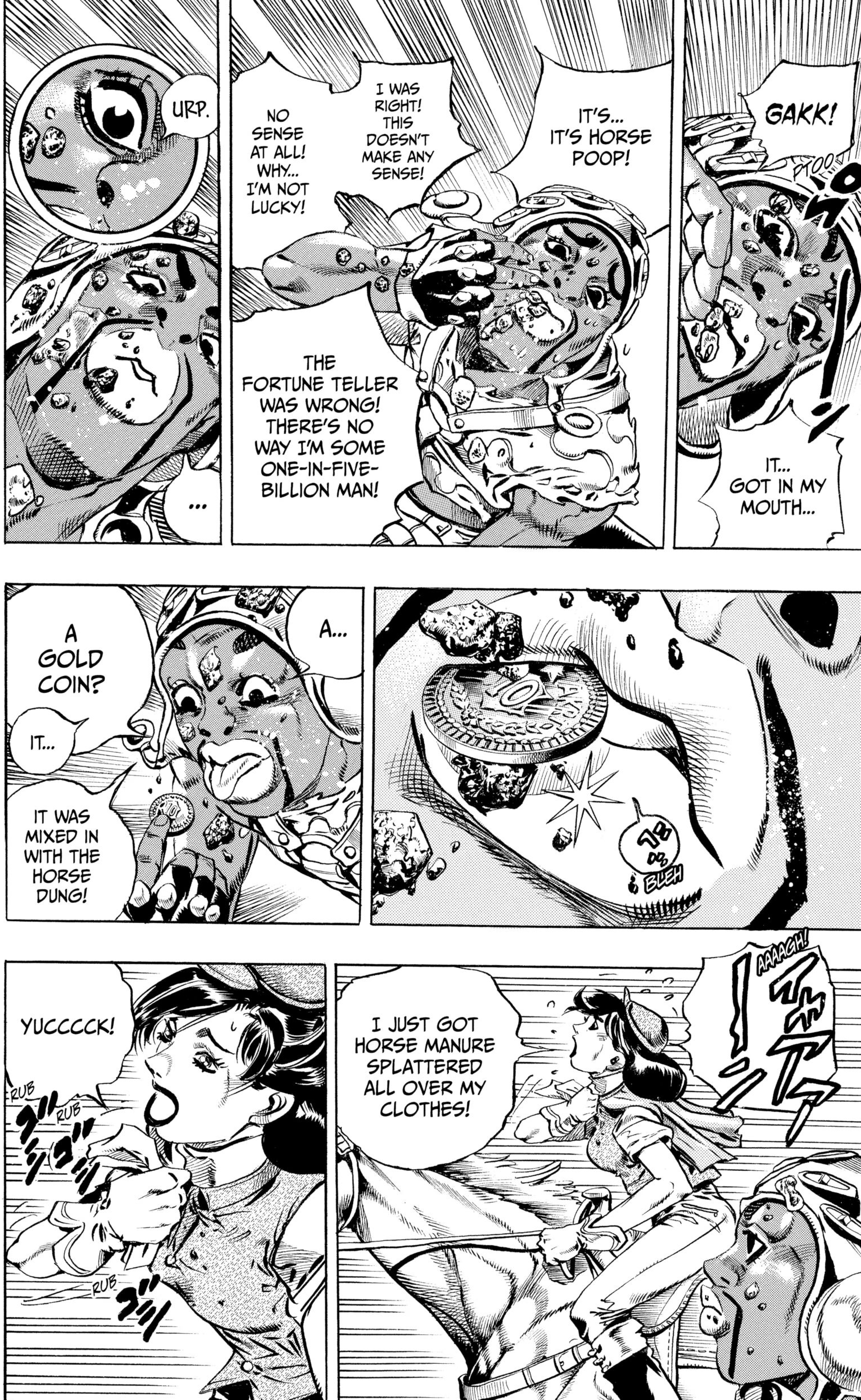
Pocoloco (age 21)
Racer No. A-777
Occupation: Farmer
Birthplace: Georgia

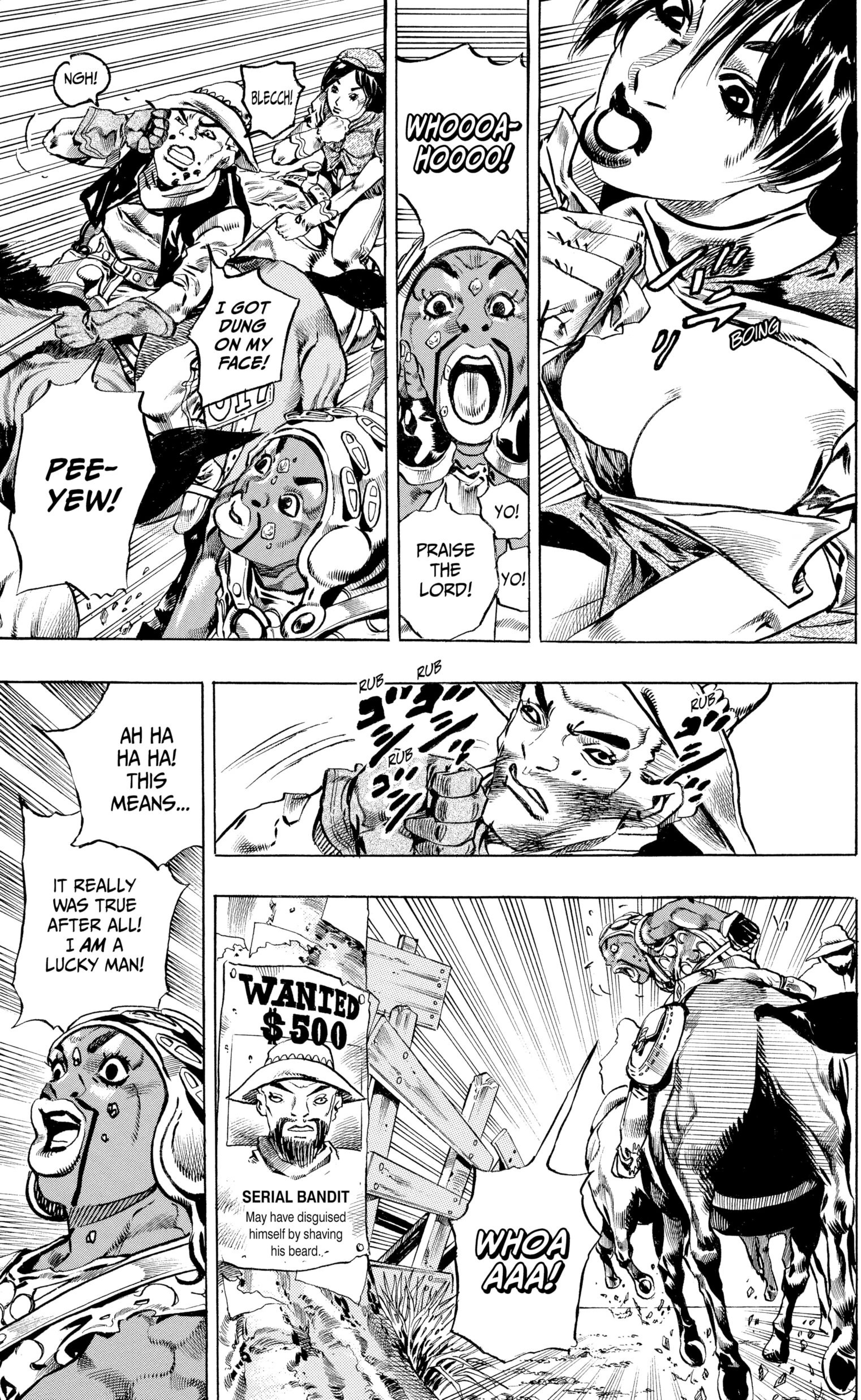

NOW WAIT A DARN MINUTE... THIS DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, DOES IT?
IF I'M A ONE-IN-FIVE-BILLION LUCKY MAN...
...HOW COULD I OVERSLEEP ON THE RACE'S OPENING DAY? AIN'T THAT A CONTRADICTION?
THAT'S NOT LUCKY. THAT'S A BAD THING!
DA-DADUM
DA-DADUM
DA-DADUM
DA-DADUM
DA-DADUM
DA-DADUM
DA-DADUM

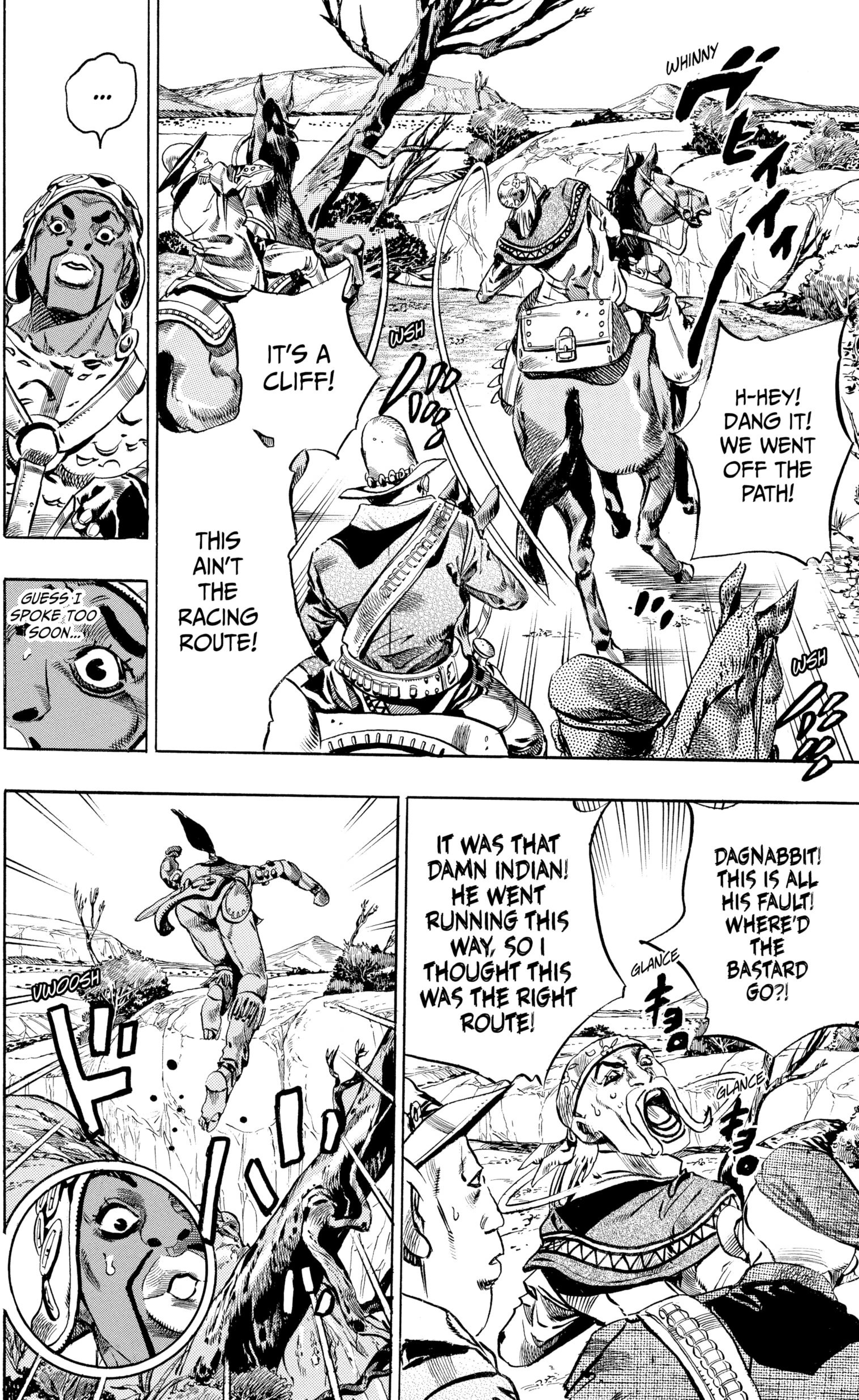
CHAPTER 7:

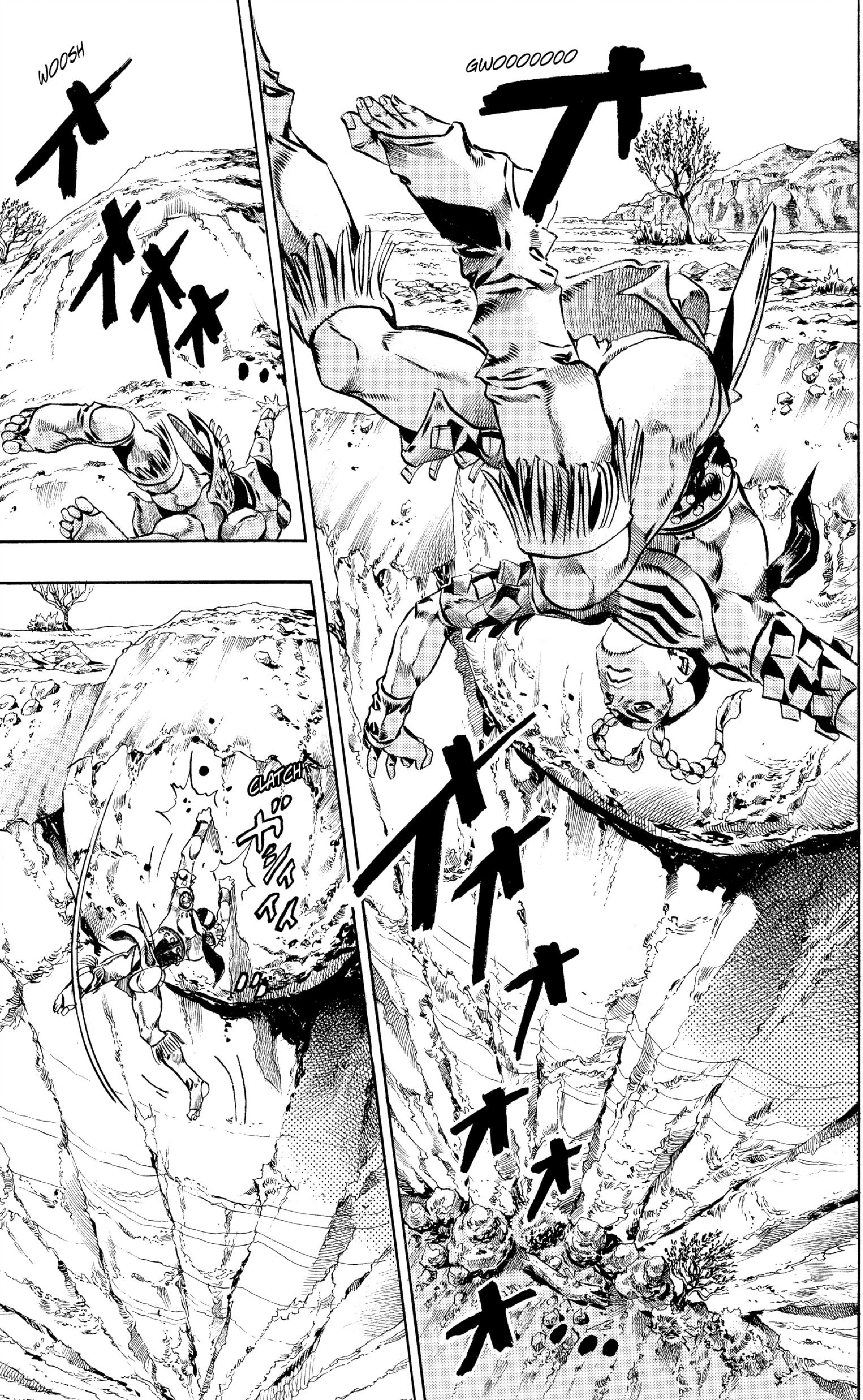
Pocoloco and Sand Man

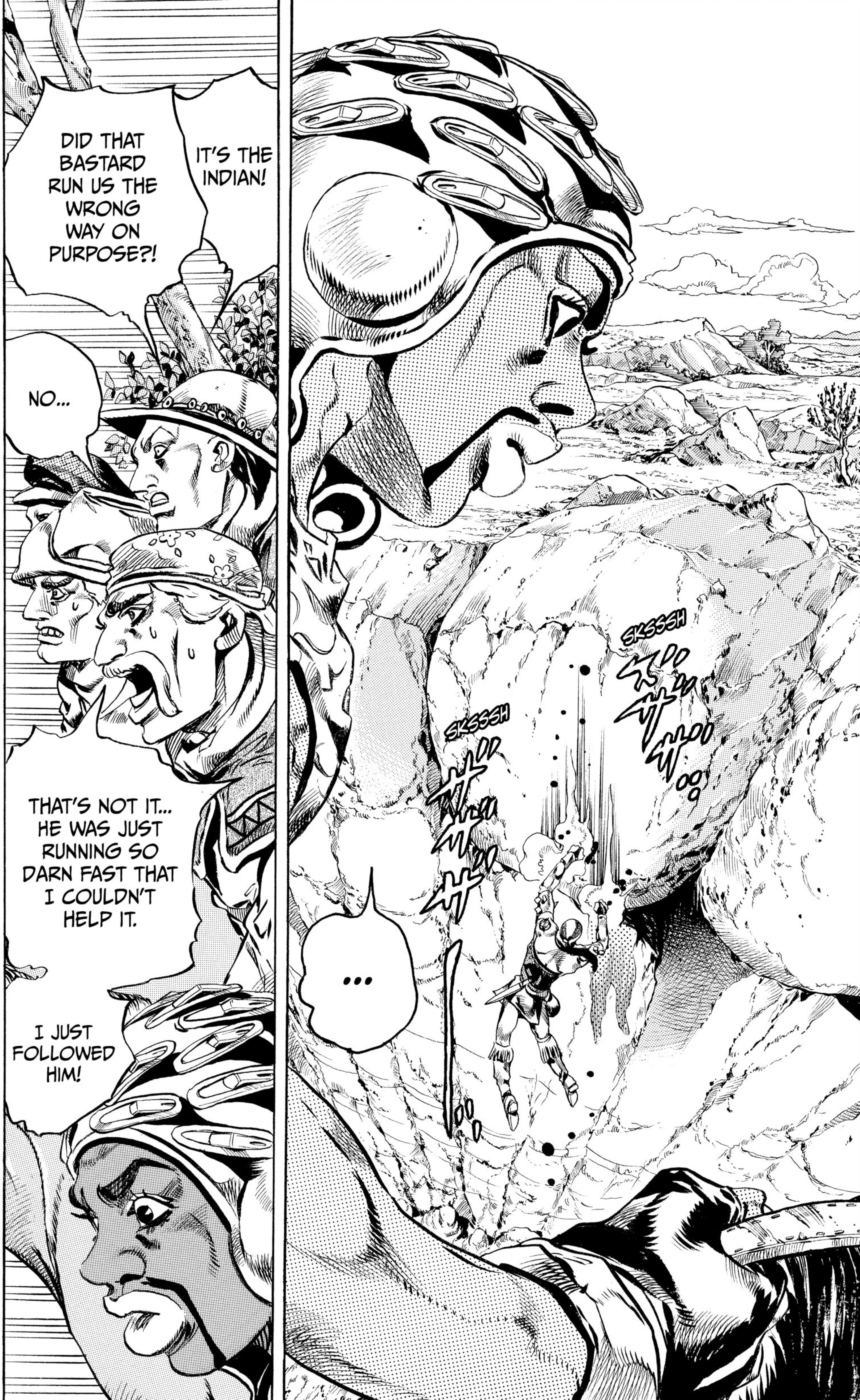
EX-CEPT...
THIS IS AWESOME! THE GROUND'S SMOOTHER AND FLATTER THAN I'VE EVER SEEN!
DA-DADUM
DA-DADUM
DA-DADUM
DA-DADUM
DA-DADUM
DA-DADUM
EVERYONE ELSE'S HORSES BEAT DOWN THE DIRT FOR ME! I'M PICKIN' UP UNBELIEVABLE SPEED!
YO!
YO!
DA-DADUM
DA-DADUM
DA-DADUM
DA-DADUM
I GUESS I REALLY AM A LUCKY MAN!
AHEM.
WELL, THIS IS QUITE THE REVELATION, EH?
DO DO DO DO DO DO
THERE THEY ARE!
WHY DIDN'T ANYONE TELL ME...
...THAT THIS AUTOMOBILE ONLY RUNS 400 METERS PER LITER OF FUEL?
CROSSING THE CONTINENT IS A BIT OUT OF THE QUESTION, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?
YES, IT'S A PITY. MIGHT AS WELL PACK UP AND GO BACK TO OUR HOME COUNTRY, BARON.
I CAN SEE 'EM NOW!
THIS SPEED'S LIKE A BREATH OF FRESH AIR!
I ALREADY CAUGHT UP TO THE BACK OF THE PACK!
SPLSH
SPLSH
SPLSH
SPLSH
SPLSH
SPLATT
URGH!
SPLATT

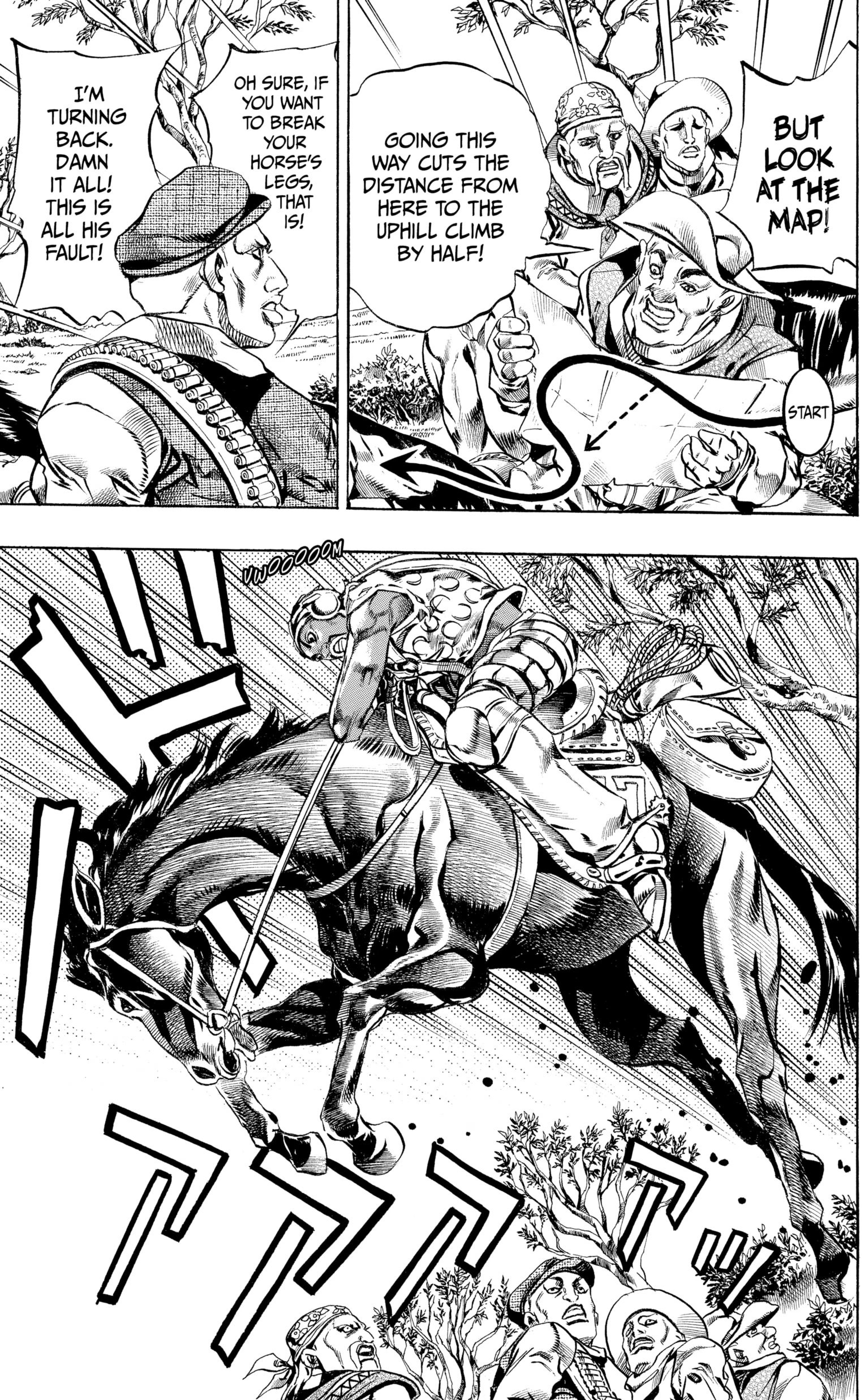

GAKK!
PTOO
IT... GOT IN MY MOUTH...
IT'S... IT'S HORSE POOP!
I WAS RIGHT! THIS DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE!
NO SENSE AT ALL! WHY... I'M NOT LUCKY!
THE FORTUNE TELLER WAS WRONG! THERE'S NO WAY I'M SOME ONE-IN-FIVE-BILLION MAN!
URP.
...
BLEH
A...
A GOLD COIN?
IT...
IT WAS MIXED IN WITH THE HORSE DUNG!
AAAAGH!
I JUST GOT HORSE MANURE SPLATTERED ALL OVER MY CLOTHES!
YUCCCCK!
RUB RUB
RUB


BOING
WHOOOA-HOOOO!
YO!
PRAISE THE LORD!
YO!
NGH!
BLECCH!
I GOT DUNG ON MY FACE!
PEE-YEW!
RUB
RUB
RUB
RUB
AH HA HA HA! THIS MEANS...
IT REALLY WAS TRUE AFTER ALL! I *AM* A LUCKY MAN!
WANTED
$500
SERIAL BANDIT
May have disguised himself by shaving his beard.
WHOA AAA!


WHINNY
ヴヒィィィーン
H-HEY! DANG IT! WE WENT OFF THE PATH!
WSH
ドドド
WSH
ドドド
IT'S A CLIFF!
THIS AIN'T THE RACING ROUTE!
...
GUESS I SPOKE TOO SOON...
DAGNABBIT! THIS IS ALL HIS FAULT! WHERE'D THE BASTARD GO?!
GLANCE
キョロ
GLANCE
キョロ
IT WAS THAT DAMN INDIAN! HE WENT RUNNING THIS WAY, SO I THOUGHT THIS WAS THE RIGHT ROUTE!
VWOOSH
ドドド


GWOOOOOOO
オオオオオオオ…
WOOSH
オオオオ…
CLATCH
ガシィィ

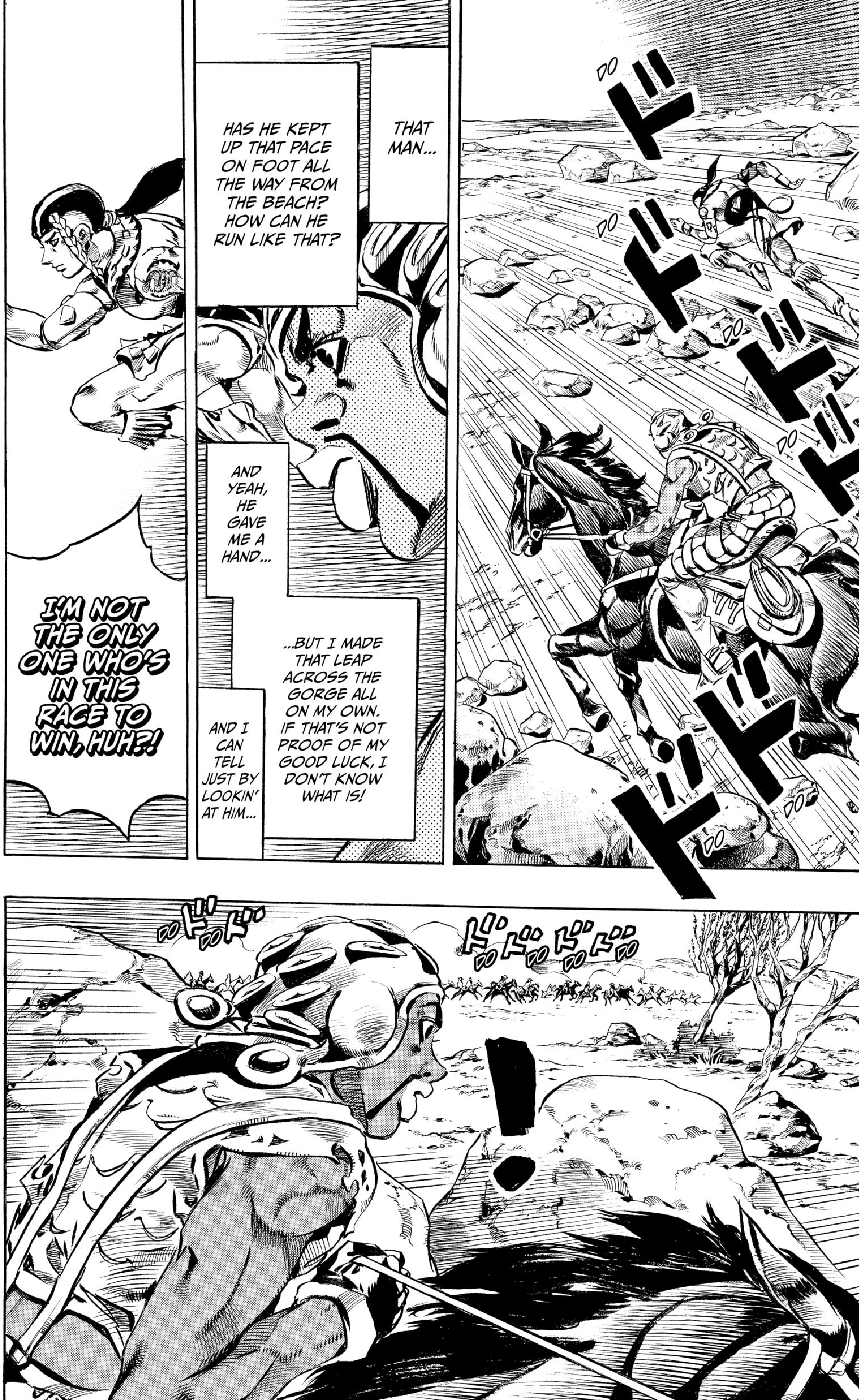

...
SKSSSH
SKSSSH
IT'S THE INDIAN!
DID THAT BASTARD RUN US THE WRONG WAY ON PURPOSE?!
NO...
THAT'S NOT IT... HE WAS JUST RUNNING SO DARN FAST THAT I COULDN'T HELP IT.
I JUST FOLLOWED HIM!

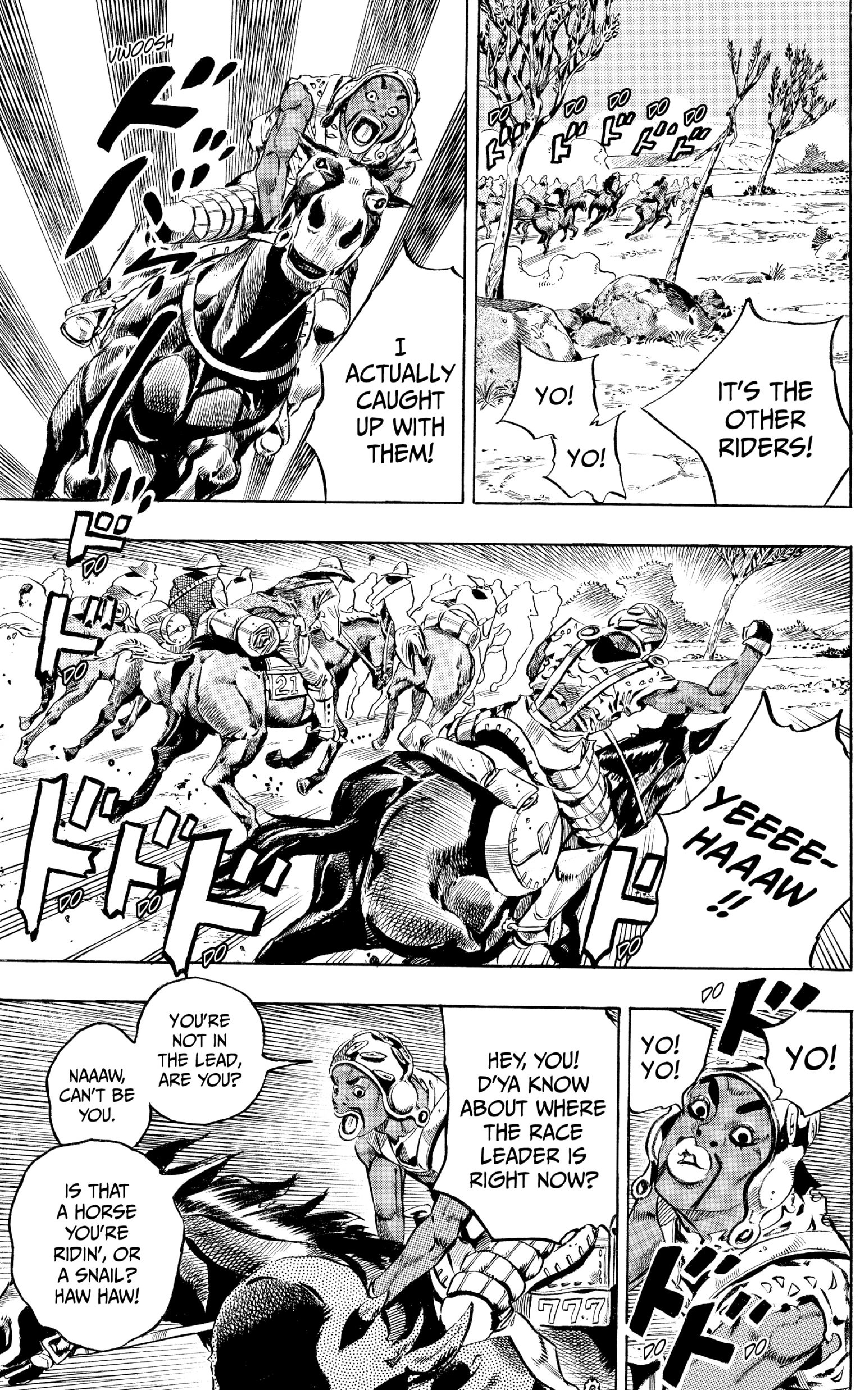

BUT LOOK AT THE MAP!
GOING THIS WAY CUTS THE DISTANCE FROM HERE TO THE UPHILL CLIMB BY HALF!
START
OH SURE, IF YOU WANT TO BREAK YOUR HORSE'S LEGS, THAT IS!
I'M TURNING BACK. DAMN IT ALL! THIS IS ALL HIS FAULT!
VWOOOOOM

...
777
I'M ONE IN FIVE BILLION. I'VE GOTTA BELIEVE IN THAT. MY BELIEF BROUGHT ME ALL THE WAY TO SAN DIEGO, BUT IF I'M WRONG, IT'LL ALL END HERE...
NO, I WILL WIN. I'M GONNA WIN, AND WHEN I GET BACK HOME...
...I'LL LIVE A HAP-HAP-HAPPIER LIFE!!
GWOOAAAA

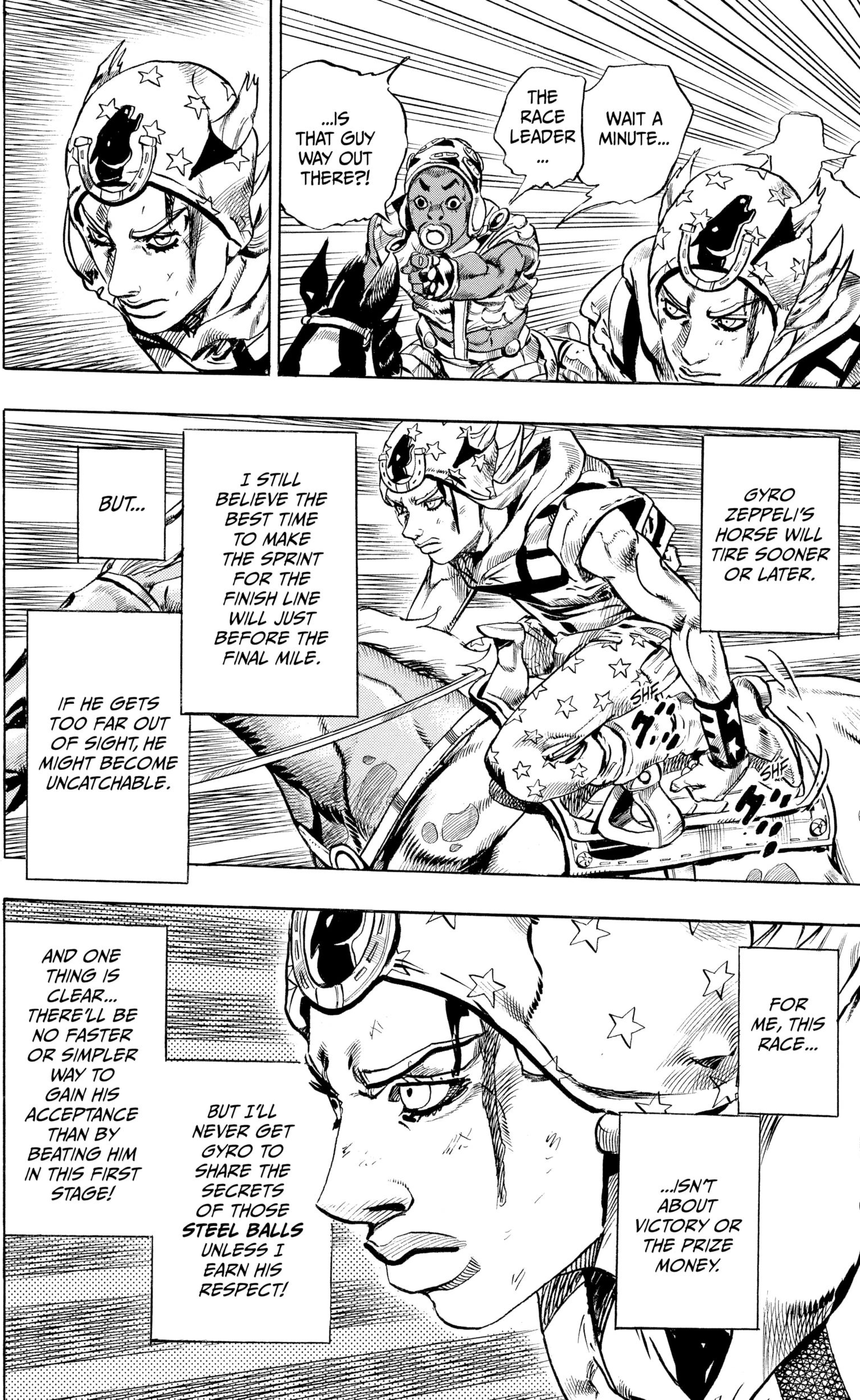
WHAAAAM
DDD
SKF
SKF
SKF
AAA AAA AAA AAA AHH!
TEETER
TEETER
DDD
OR IS THAT LASSO JUST FOR SHOW?
YOU HAVE A ROPE. USE IT.
UWOOOOSH
DDD

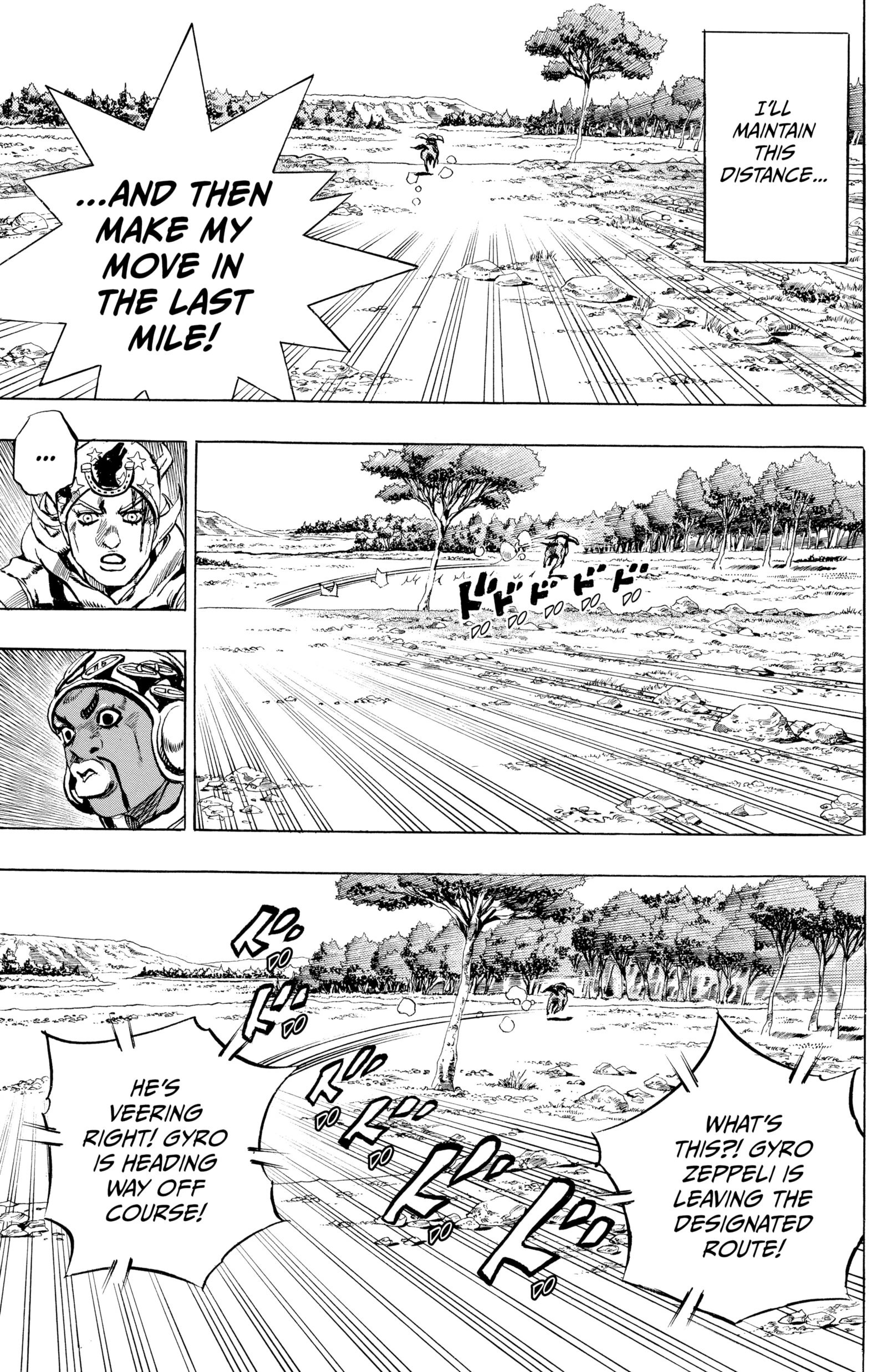
ZWOOOOOOSH
!
HUFF!
AAAA AAAA AHH!
THMP
KRUMBL
ドド…
DO DO
VWSH
ドドドド
DO DO DO DO
ドドドドドドド
DO DO DO DO DO DO DO

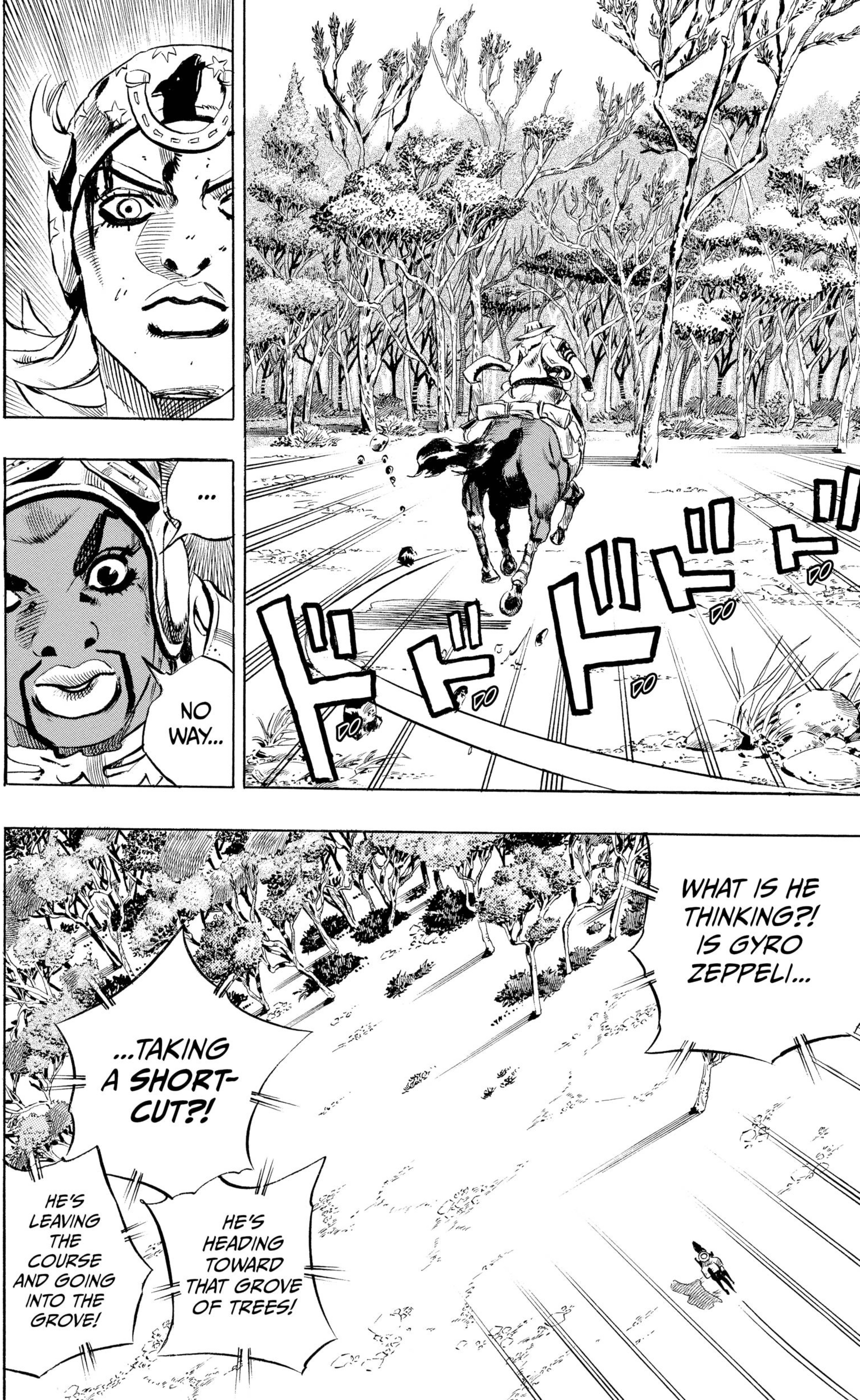

DO ド DO ド DO ド DO ド DO ド DO ド
THAT MAN...
HAS HE KEPT UP THAT PACE ON FOOT ALL THE WAY FROM THE BEACH? HOW CAN HE RUN LIKE THAT?
AND YEAH, HE GAVE ME A HAND...
...BUT I MADE THAT LEAP ACROSS THE GORGE ALL ON MY OWN. IF THAT'S NOT PROOF OF MY GOOD LUCK, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IS!
AND I CAN TELL JUST BY LOOKIN' AT HIM...
I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO'S IN THIS RACE TO WIN, HUH?!
ド DO ド DO ド DO ド DO
DO ド DO ド
!

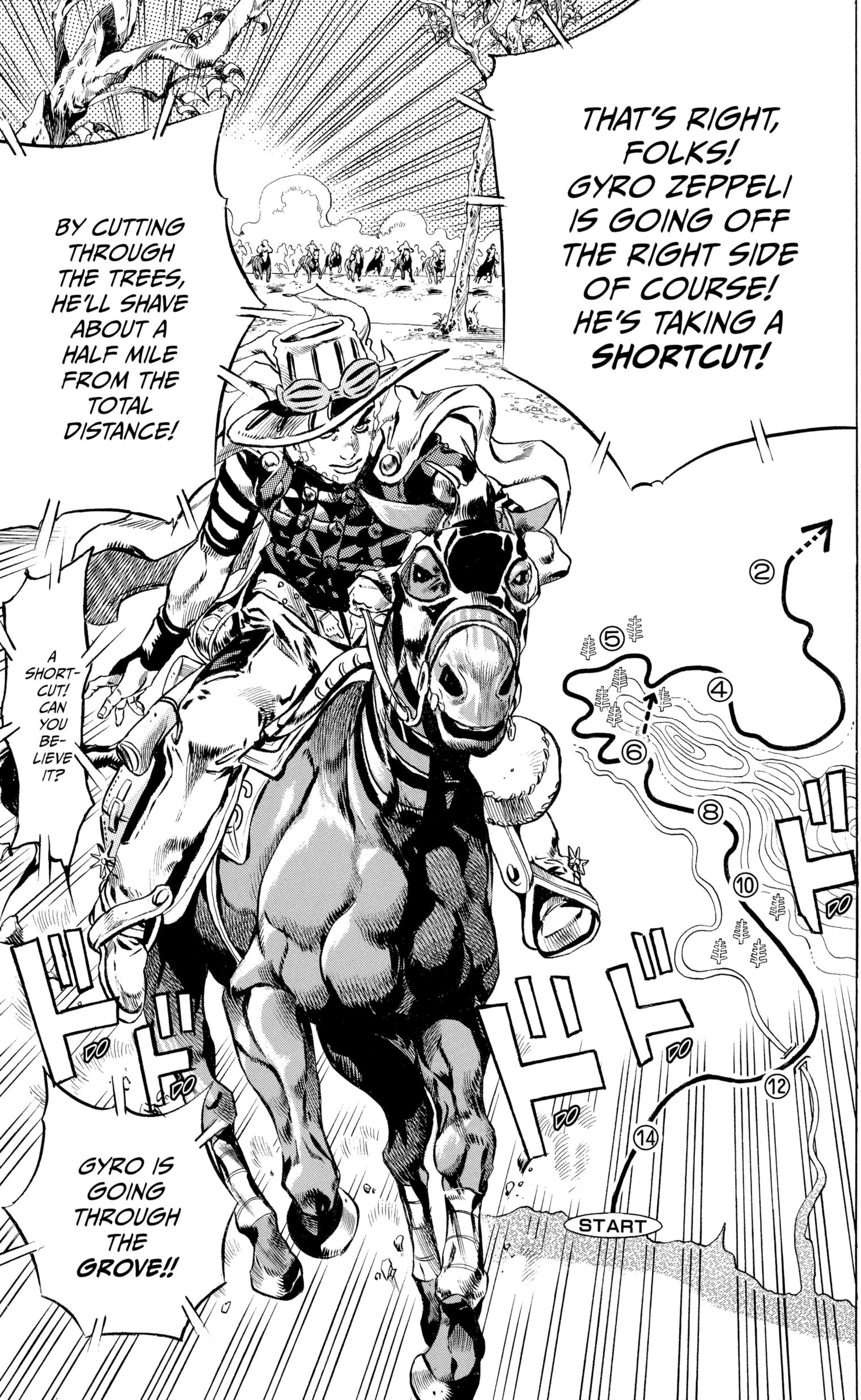

DO DO DO DO DO
YO!
YO!
IT'S THE OTHER RIDERS!
UWOOSH
I ACTUALLY CAUGHT UP WITH THEM!
DO DO DO DO DO DO
YEEEE-HAAAW!!
DO
YO!
YO! YO!
DO DO
HEY, YOU! D'YA KNOW ABOUT WHERE THE RACE LEADER IS RIGHT NOW?
YOU'RE NOT IN THE LEAD, ARE YOU?
NAAAW, CAN'T BE YOU.
IS THAT A HORSE YOU'RE RIDIN', OR A SNAIL? HAW HAW!
21
777

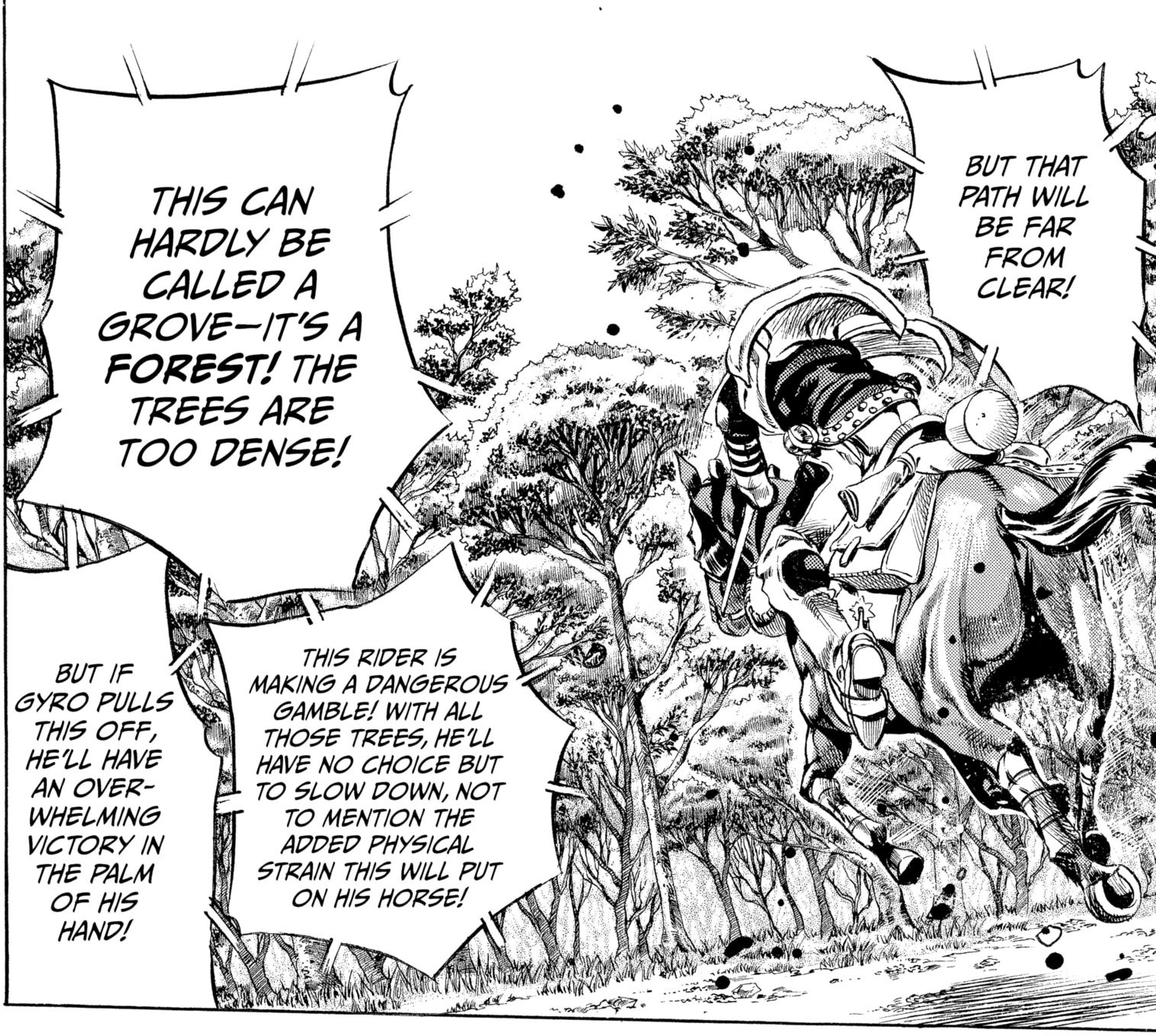
AH!
ヴ
VUM
6.
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! THE RIDERS HAVE PASSED THE NEXT MARKER. THEY HAVE LESS THAN FOUR MILES TO THE FINISH LINE!
THE FIRST STAGE BEGAN WITH 9.3 MILES AHEAD OF THEM—AND SOON THEY'LL HAVE JUST A THIRD OF THAT WAY LEFT TO GO!
GYRO ZEPPELI IS STILL AT THE FRONT OF THE PACK!
HE'S EXPANDED HIS LEAD TO SOMEWHERE AROUND 60 OR 70 LENGTHS! IS HE GOING TO MAKE A CLEAN BREAK?! IS THIS HAPPENING?! WILL OUR LONE FUGITIVE CHARACTER SUCCEED IN MAKING HIS GETAWAY ONCE THE CURTAIN FALLS?!
ドドドドド
DO
ブーーン
VWOOM

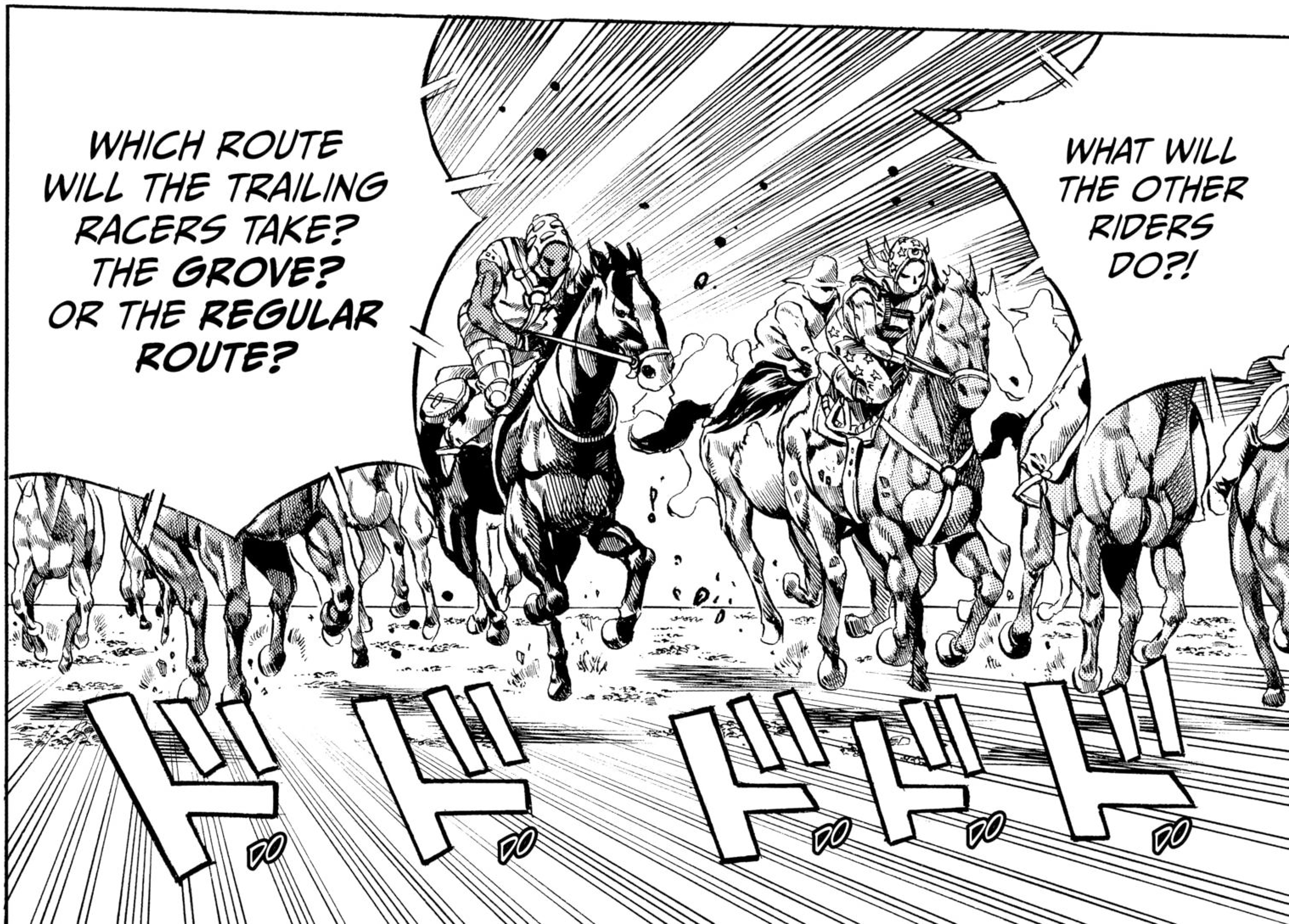

WAIT A MINUTE...
THE RACE LEADER ...
...IS THAT GUY WAY OUT THERE?!
GYRO ZEPPELI'S HORSE WILL TIRE SOONER OR LATER.
I STILL BELIEVE THE BEST TIME TO MAKE THE SPRINT FOR THE FINISH LINE WILL JUST BEFORE THE FINAL MILE.
BUT...
IF HE GETS TOO FAR OUT OF SIGHT, HE MIGHT BECOME UNCATCHABLE.
SHF
SHF
FOR ME, THIS RACE...
...ISN'T ABOUT VICTORY OR THE PRIZE MONEY.
BUT I'LL NEVER GET GYRO TO SHARE THE SECRETS OF THOSE STEEL BALLS UNLESS I EARN HIS RESPECT!
AND ONE THING IS CLEAR... THERE'LL BE NO FASTER OR SIMPLER WAY TO GAIN HIS ACCEPTANCE THAN BY BEATING HIM IN THIS FIRST STAGE!

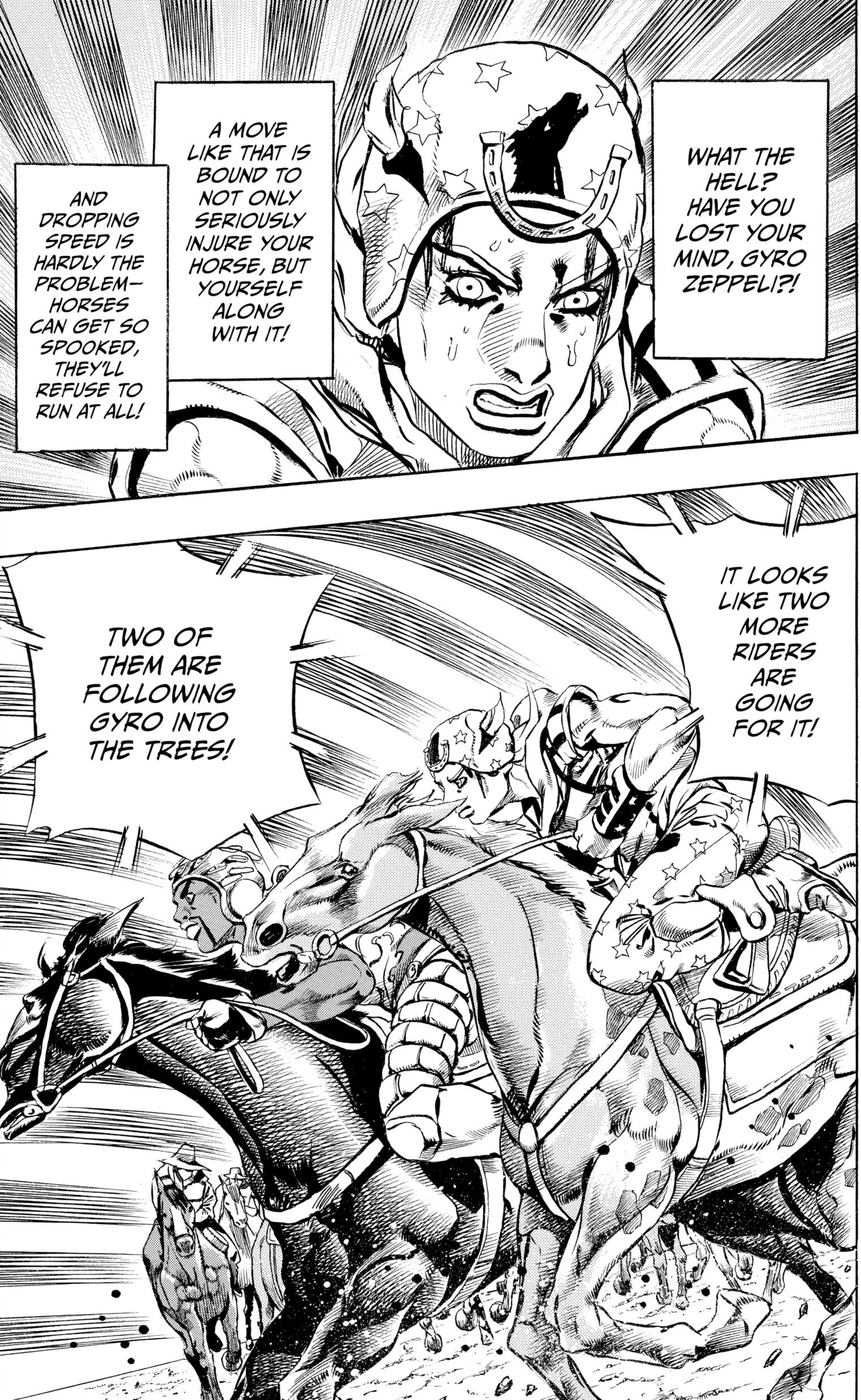

I'LL MAINTAIN THIS DISTANCE...
...AND THEN MAKE MY MOVE IN THE LAST MILE!
ドドドドド
DO DO DO DO DO
...
WHAT'S THIS?! GYRO ZEPPELI IS LEAVING THE DESIGNATED ROUTE!
HE'S VEERING RIGHT! GYRO IS HEADING WAY OFF COURSE!
ドドドドド
DO DO DO DO DO


ドドドドド
DO DO DO DO DO
...
NO WAY...
WHAT IS HE THINKING?! IS GYRO ZEPPELI...
...TAKING A SHORTCUT?!
HE'S HEADING TOWARD THAT GROVE OF TREES!
HE'S LEAVING THE COURSE AND GOING INTO THE GROVE!


THAT'S RIGHT, FOLKS! GYRO ZEPPELI IS GOING OFF THE RIGHT SIDE OF COURSE! HE'S TAKING A SHORTCUT!
BY CUTTING THROUGH THE TREES, HE'LL SHAVE ABOUT A HALF MILE FROM THE TOTAL DISTANCE!
A SHORT-CUT! CAN YOU BE-LIEVE IT?
GYRO IS GOING THROUGH THE GROVE!!
②
⑤
④
⑥
⑧
⑩
⑫
⑭
START
ドドドドドドドドド
DO DO DO DO DO DO


THIS CAN HARDLY BE CALLED A GROVE—IT'S A **FOREST!** THE TREES ARE TOO DENSE!
THIS RIDER IS MAKING A DANGEROUS GAMBLE! WITH ALL THOSE TREES, HE'LL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO SLOW DOWN, NOT TO MENTION THE ADDED PHYSICAL STRAIN THIS WILL PUT ON HIS HORSE!
BUT IF GYRO PULLS THIS OFF, HE'LL HAVE AN OVERWHELMING VICTORY IN THE PALM OF HIS HAND!
BUT THAT PATH WILL BE FAR FROM CLEAR!

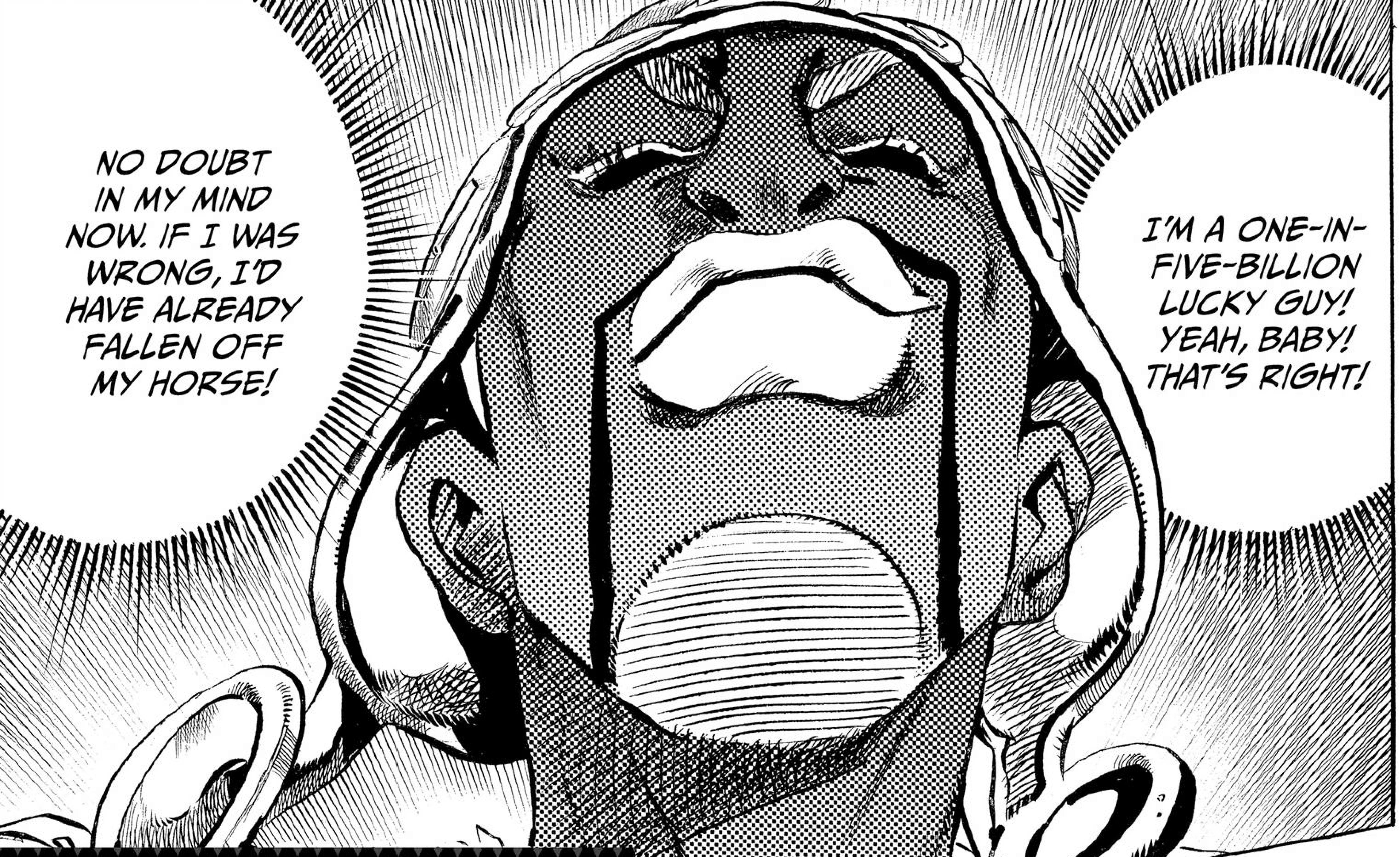

WHAT WILL THE OTHER RIDERS DO?!
WHICH ROUTE WILL THE TRAILING RACERS TAKE? THE **GROVE?** OR THE **REGULAR ROUTE?**
ドドドドド
DO DO DO DO DO


WHAT THE HELL? HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND, GYRO ZEPPELI?!
A MOVE LIKE THAT IS BOUND TO NOT ONLY SERIOUSLY INJURE YOUR HORSE, BUT YOURSELF ALONG WITH IT!
AND DROPPING SPEED IS HARDLY THE PROBLEM—HORSES CAN GET SO SPOOKED, THEY'LL REFUSE TO RUN AT ALL!
IT LOOKS LIKE TWO MORE RIDERS ARE GOING FOR IT!
TWO OF THEM ARE FOLLOWING GYRO INTO THE TREES!

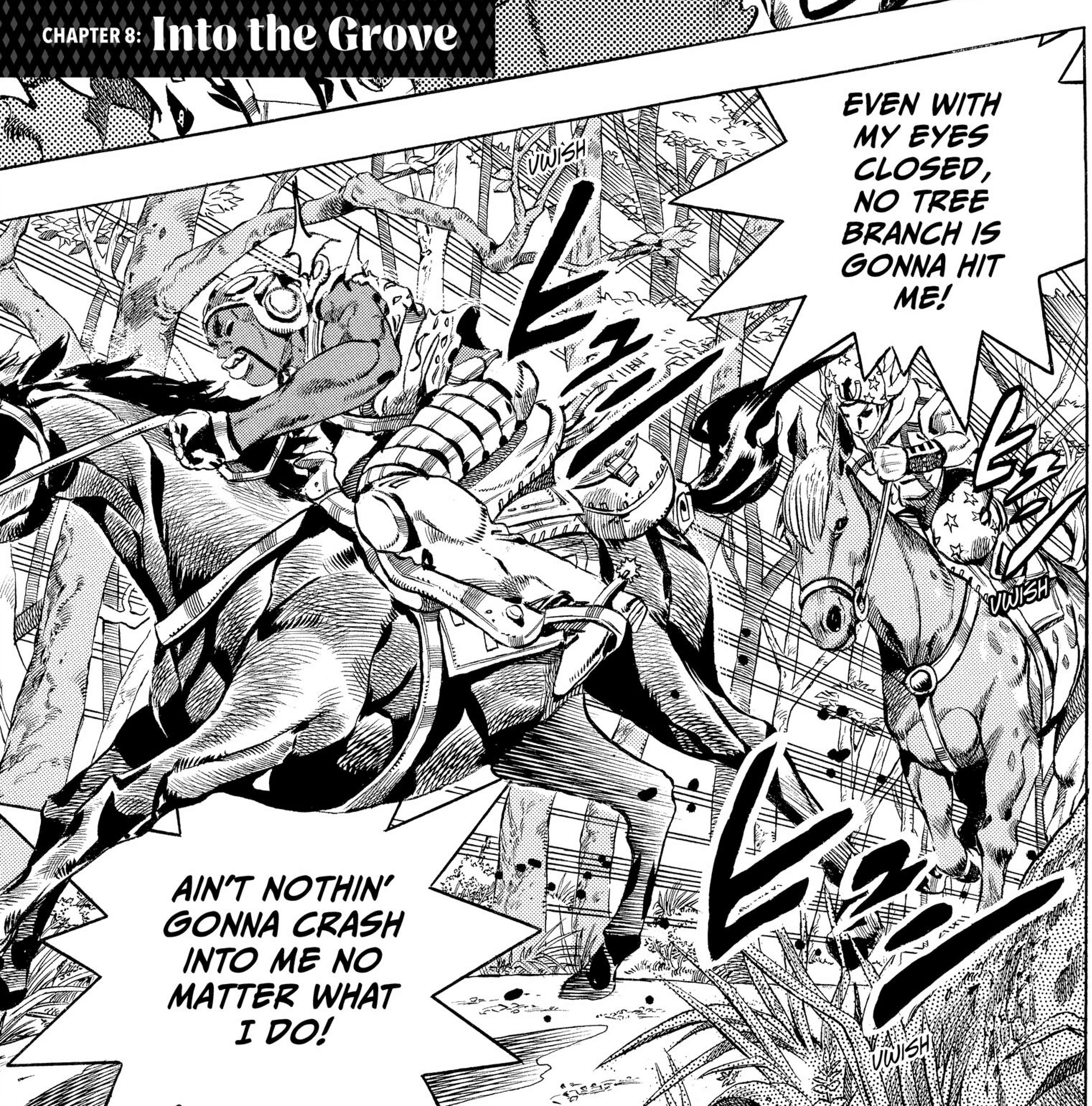
HM!
HMPH!
AND MORE FROM THE TRAILING GROUP ARE JOINING IN!
NOW EIGHT!
THERE'S SEVEN!
THEY'RE CALLING GYRO'S BET!
ドドドドドドド
DO
DO
DO
DO
DO
DO
DO
ヴァ
VWSH

VWSH
VWSH
VWSH
VWSH
WOOOSH
DOOON
NYO-HO!
GYRO HAS VANISHED INTO THE WOODS!
DO DO DO DO
CLOSE
DO DO DO DO DO

WHAT THE HECK...?
WHAT'S THAT FOOL DOING?!
HIS EYES ARE CLOSED!
WHAT IS HE THINKING?!
THEY'RE ALL THE WAY SHUT. NOT EVEN A PEEK!
AND HIS POSTURE ON THE SADDLE... HE ISN'T AFRAID—HE'S **CONFIDENT!** WHAT'S HIS DEAL...?
HE'S NOT FORCING THEM CLOSED. IT'S ALMOST LIKE RESOLVE... OR LIKE HE'S TESTING HIMSELF.
HE'S SPEEDING UP?!
VWOOM
NUMBER 777 IS THE FIRST TO DIVE IN!
777


I'M A ONE-IN-FIVE-BILLION LUCKY GUY! YEAH, BABY! THAT'S RIGHT!
NO DOUBT IN MY MIND NOW. IF I WAS WRONG, I'D HAVE ALREADY FALLEN OFF MY HORSE!

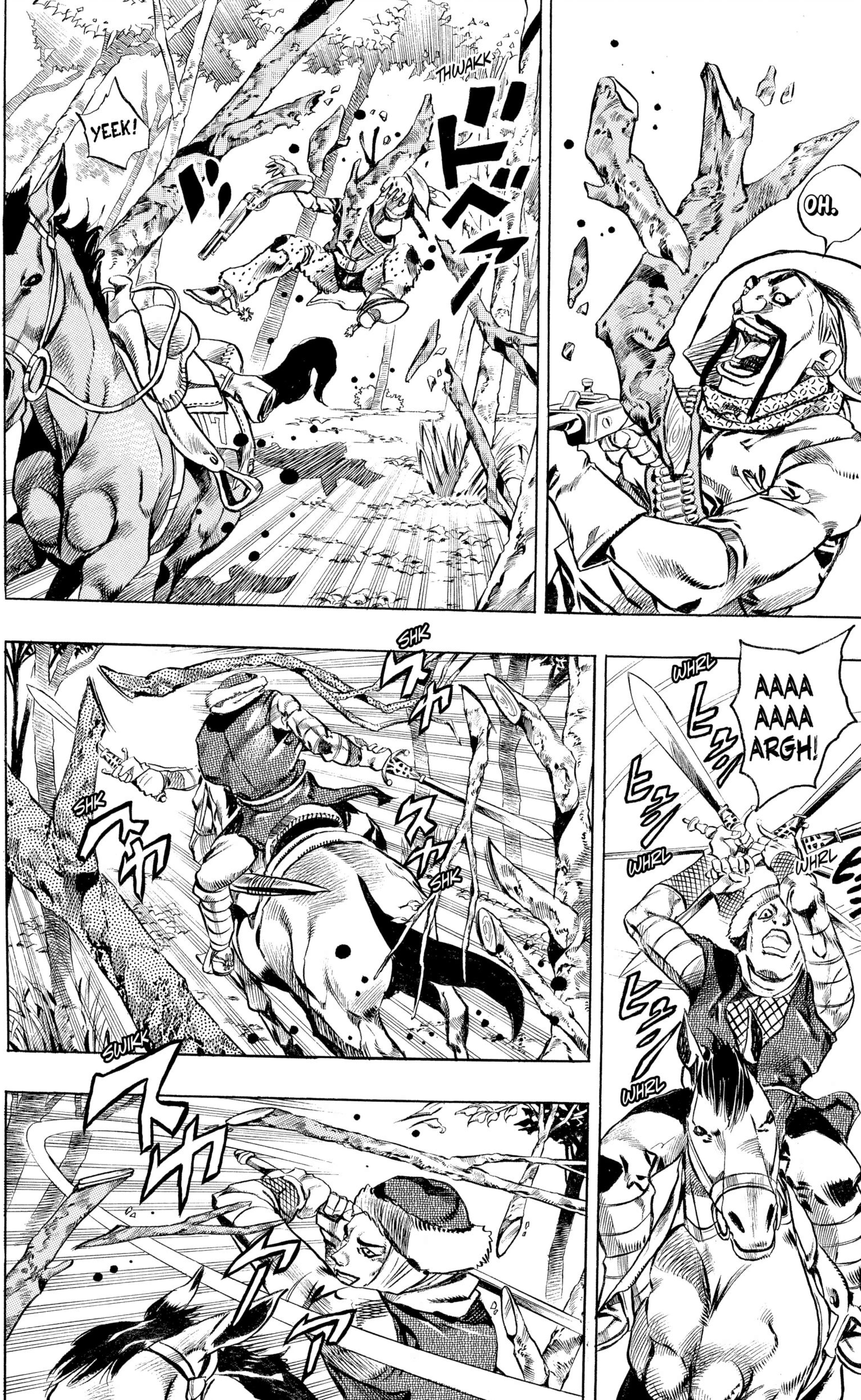
CHAPTER 8: Into the Grove

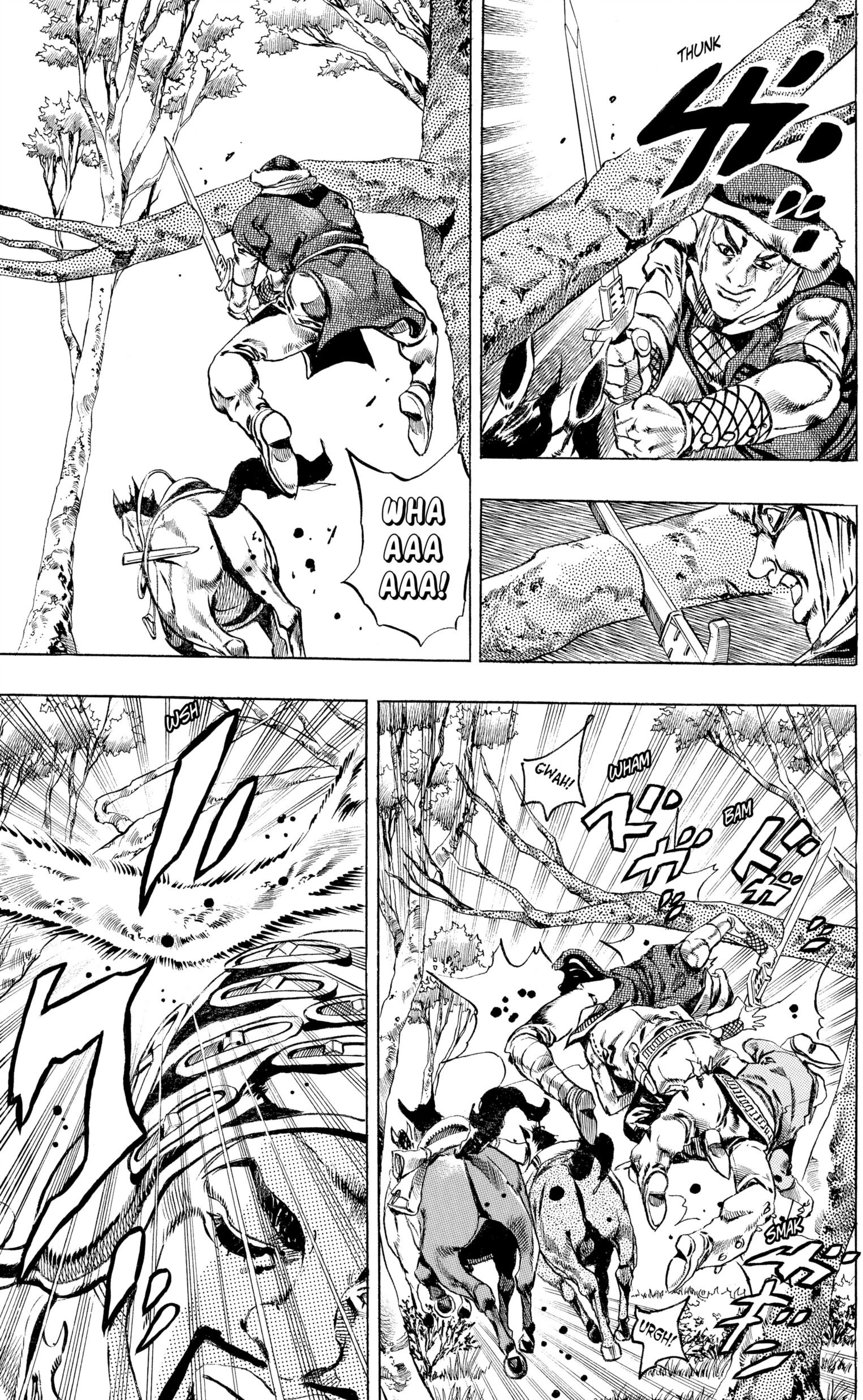

EVEN WITH MY EYES CLOSED, NO TREE BRANCH IS GONNA HIT ME!
VWISH
VWISH
AIN'T NOTHIN' GONNA CRASH INTO ME NO MATTER WHAT I DO!
VWISH

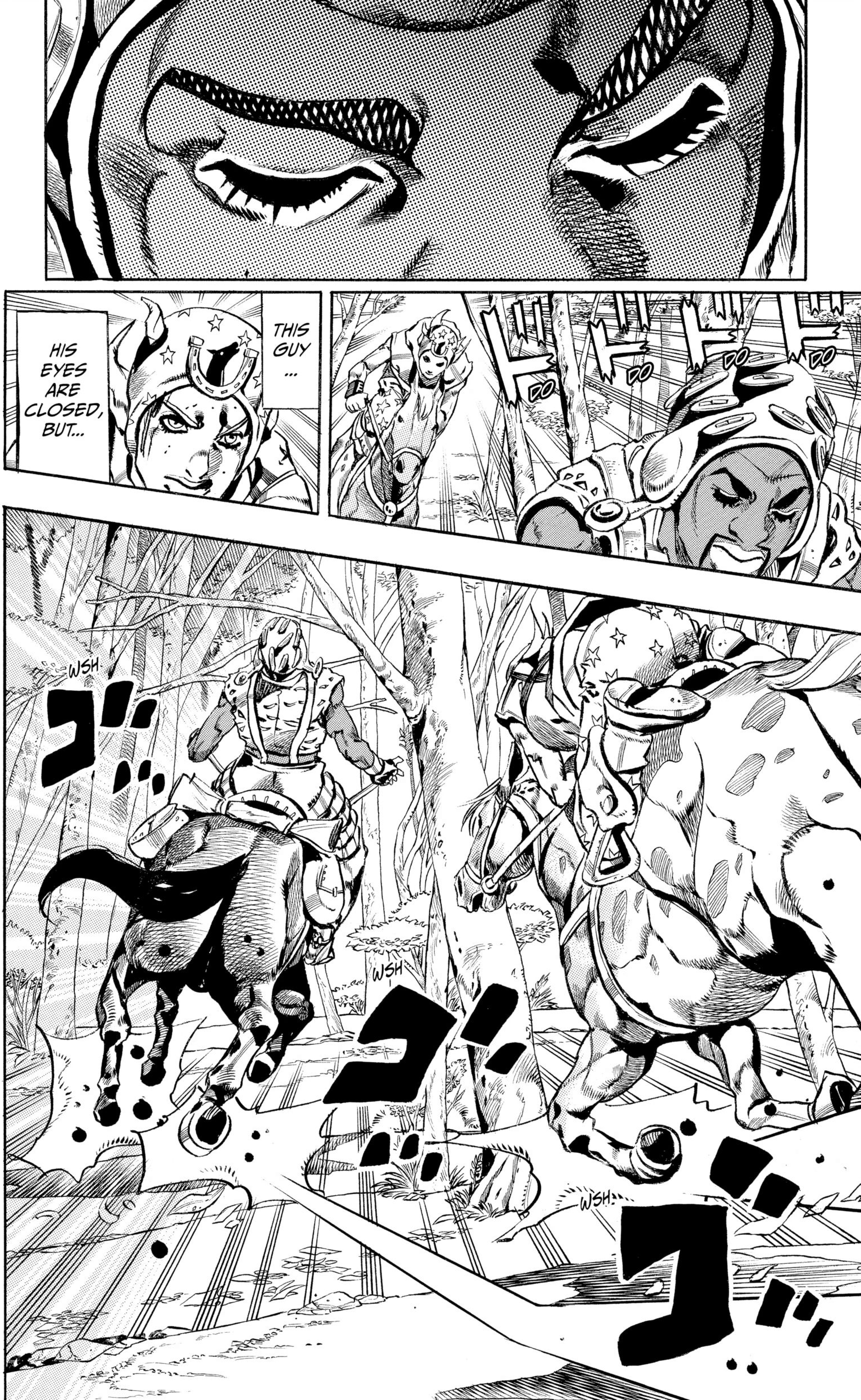
CHAPTER 8: Into the Grove

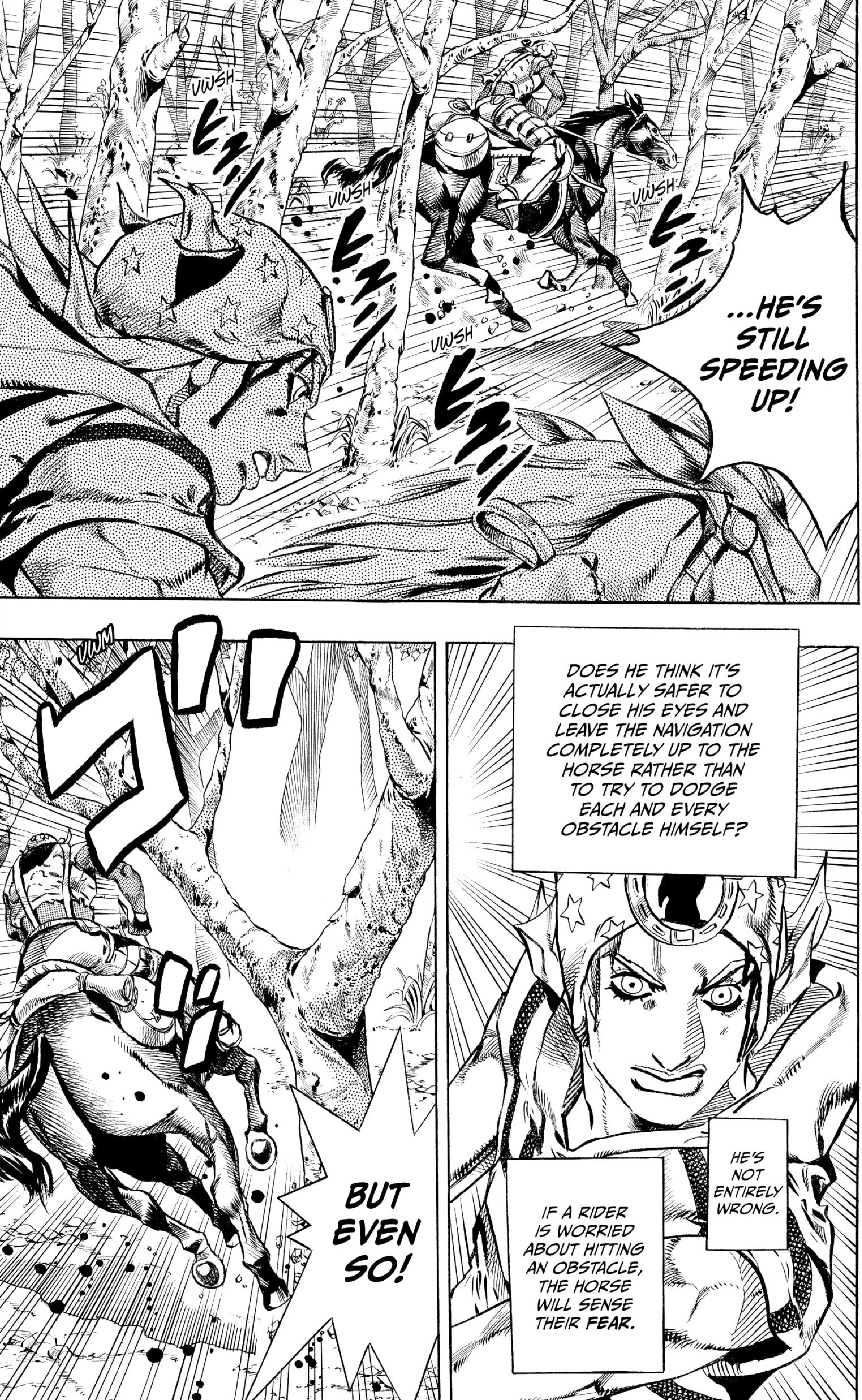
THE 3,800 RIDERS ARE SPLITTING INTO TWO GROUPS!
LONE FRONT-RUNNER GYRO ZEPPELI IS BETTING IT ALL ON A SHORTCUT THROUGH THE GROVE, AND ONE GROUP IS FOLLOWING HIM IN!
THE OTHER GROUP IS GOING THE LONG WAY AROUND. IT'S AN EXTRA HALF MILE, BUT THEY'RE STICKING TO THE LOW-RISK DESIGNATED ROUTE!
BUT WHICH WILL BE THE FIRST TO ARRIVE AT THE FINISH LINE? UNTIL THIS STAGE IS OVER, NO ONE CAN SAY!
ドドドドドドドドドドドドド
DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO

WHM
WHM
WHM
DAMN IT! WHERE IS HE? WHERE'S GYRO?!
I CAN'T SEE HIM ANYWHERE!
I CAN'T LET MYSELF FALL ANY FARTHER BEHIND!
YAAAAAAAAAAAH!
DO
DO
DO
DO
FWIP
WHM
BANG
AH HA HA HA HA HA!

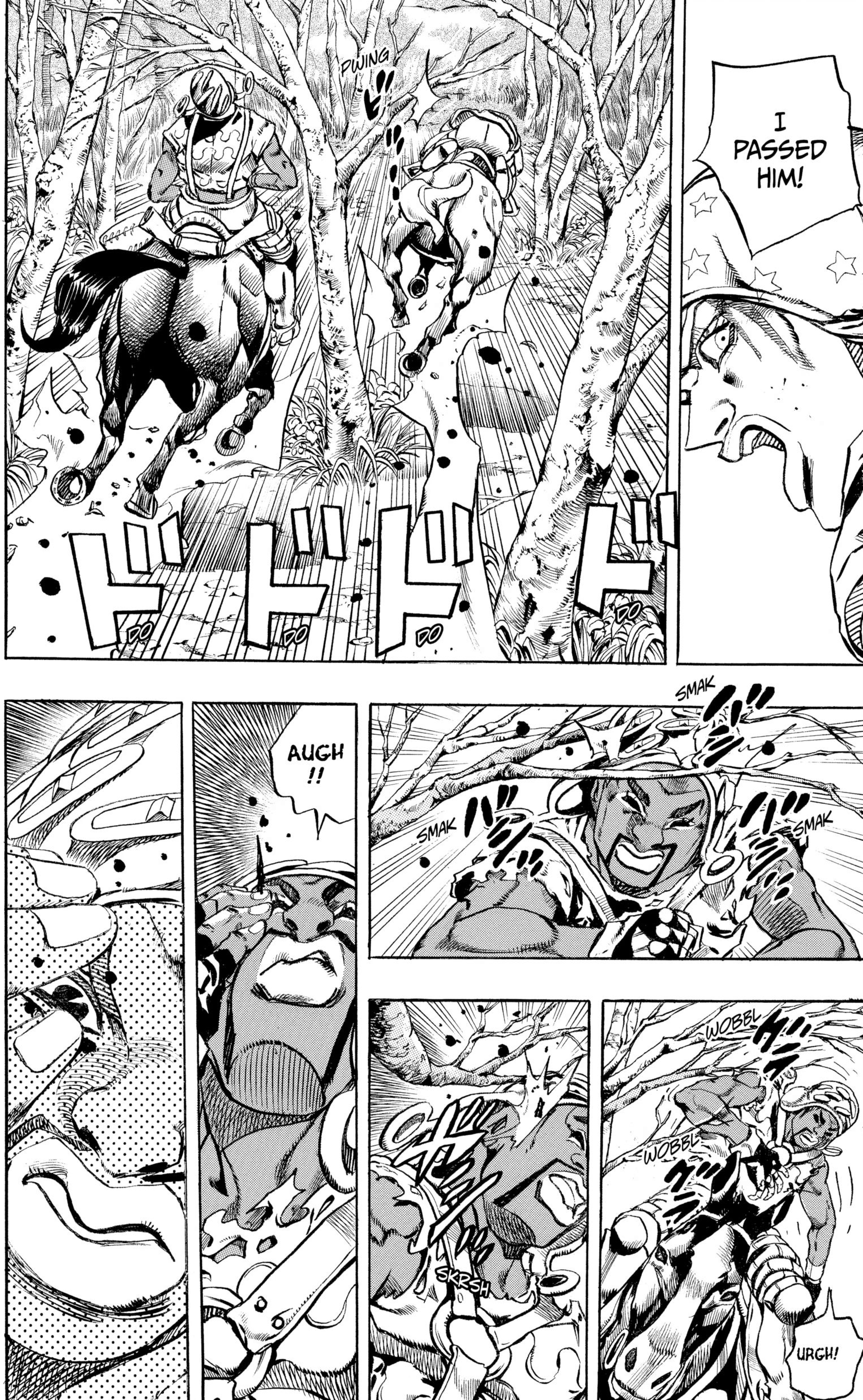

OH.
THWAKK
YEEK!
WHRL
AAAA AAAA ARGH!
WHRL
WHRL
WHRL
SHK
SHK
SHK
SWIKK

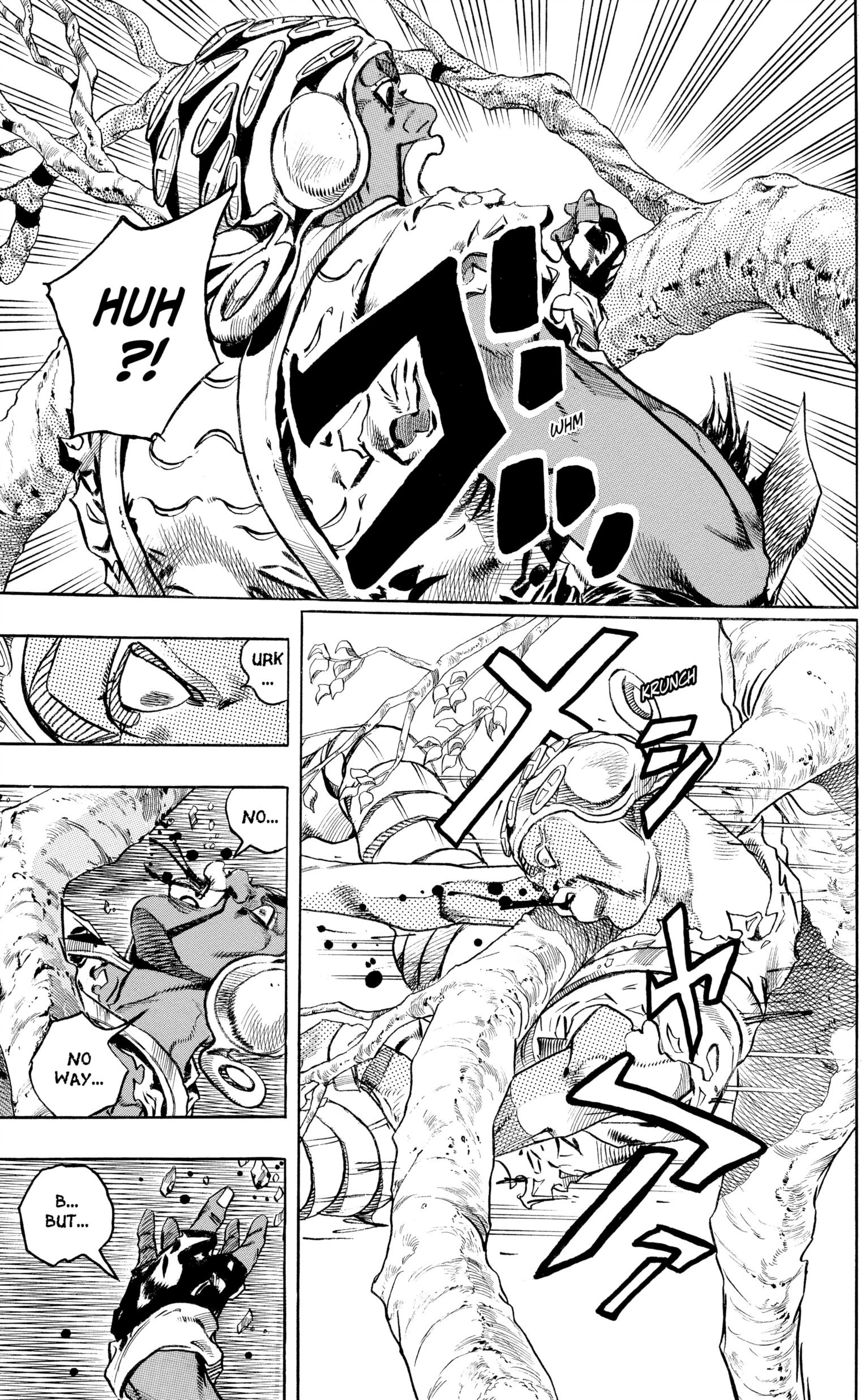

THUNK
WHA AAA AAA!
GWAH!
WHAM
BAM
SMAK
URGH!
WSH

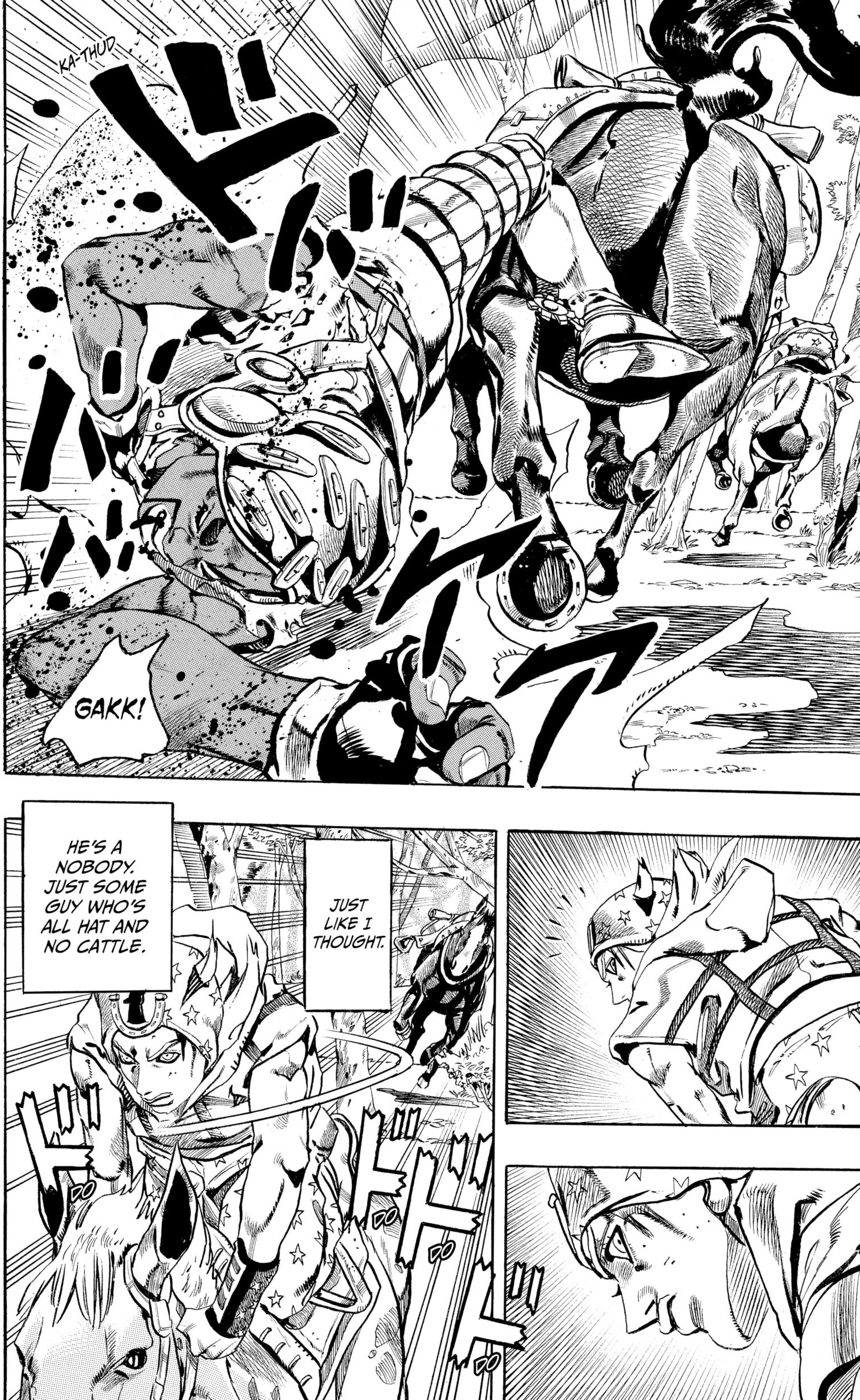

ドドドド
DO DO DO DO
THIS GUY ...
HIS EYES ARE CLOSED, BUT...
WSH
ゴゴ
WSH
ゴゴ
WSH
ゴゴ

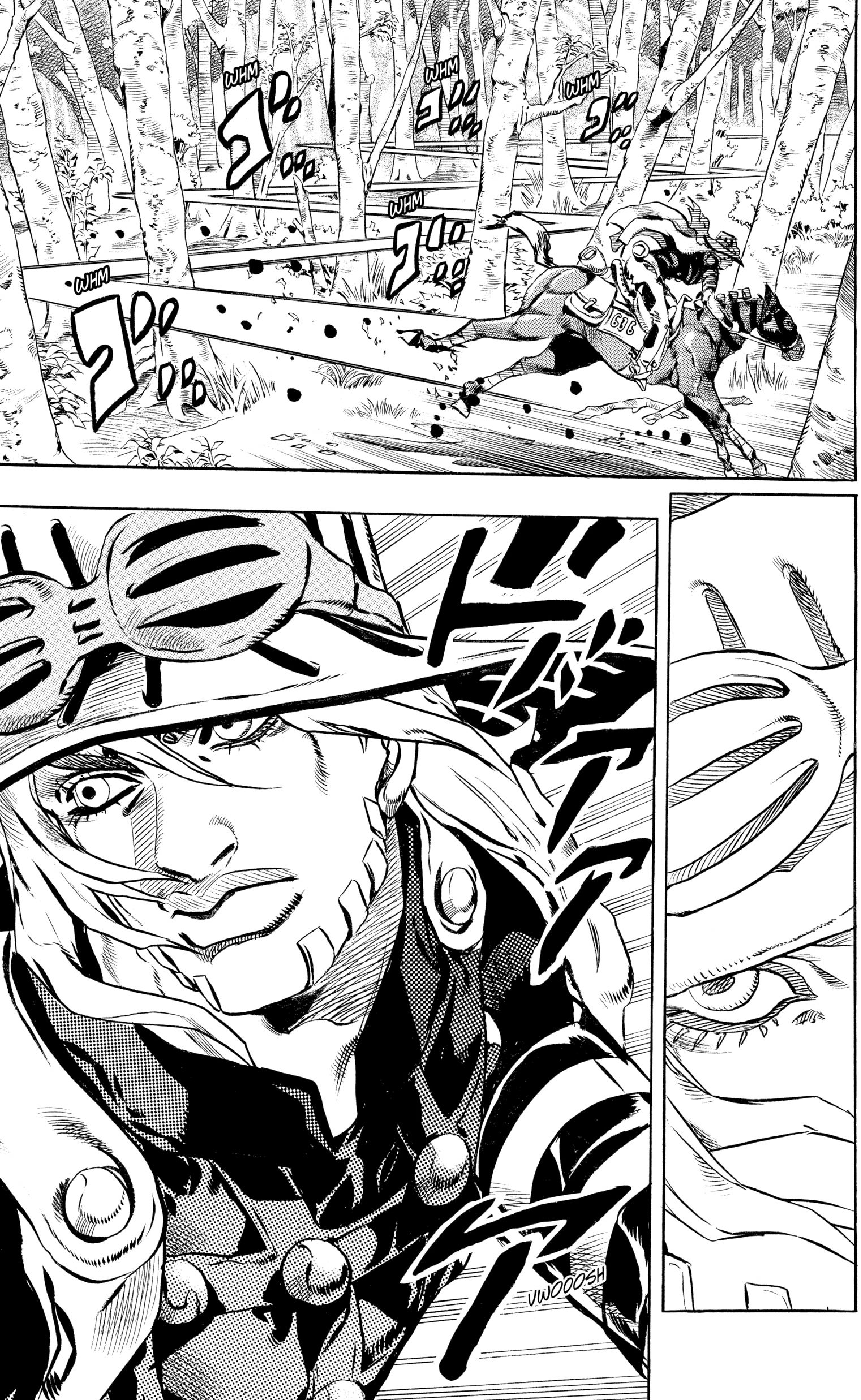

VWSH
VWSH
VWSH
VWSH
...HE'S STILL SPEEDING UP!
DOES HE THINK IT'S ACTUALLY SAFER TO CLOSE HIS EYES AND LEAVE THE NAVIGATION COMPLETELY UP TO THE HORSE RATHER THAN TO TRY TO DODGE EACH AND EVERY OBSTACLE HIMSELF?
HE'S NOT ENTIRELY WRONG.
IF A RIDER IS WORRIED ABOUT HITTING AN OBSTACLE, THE HORSE WILL SENSE THEIR FEAR.
VWM
BUT EVEN SO!

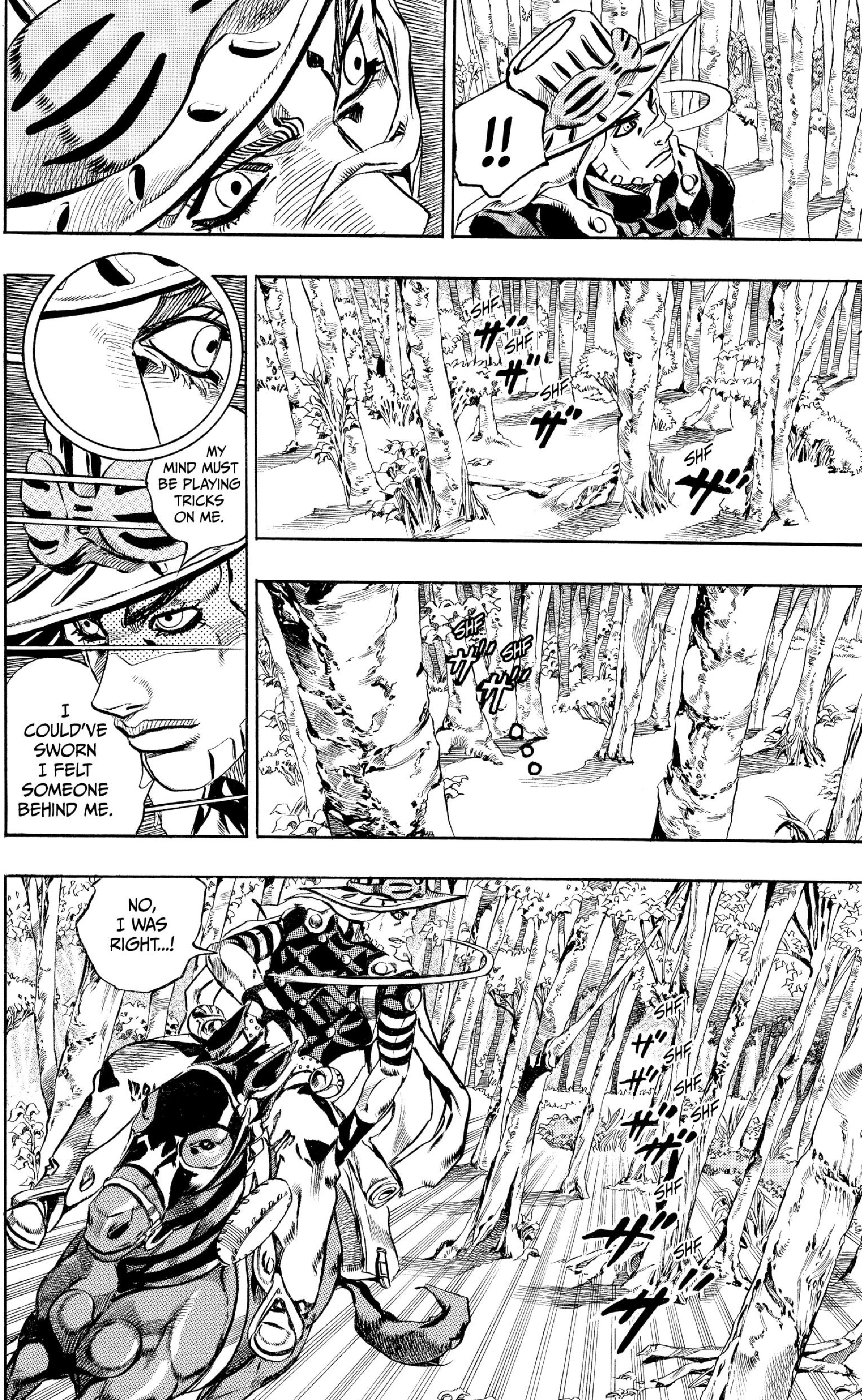
THAT KIND OF WISHFUL THINKING IS NEVER GONNA WIN THIS RACE!
VWOOOOSH
WHMM
SNIK
WSH
GYRO'S NO EXCEPTION.
I'M SURE HE'S PUSHING HIMSELF TO THE LIMIT TOO!
SKSSSSSSH

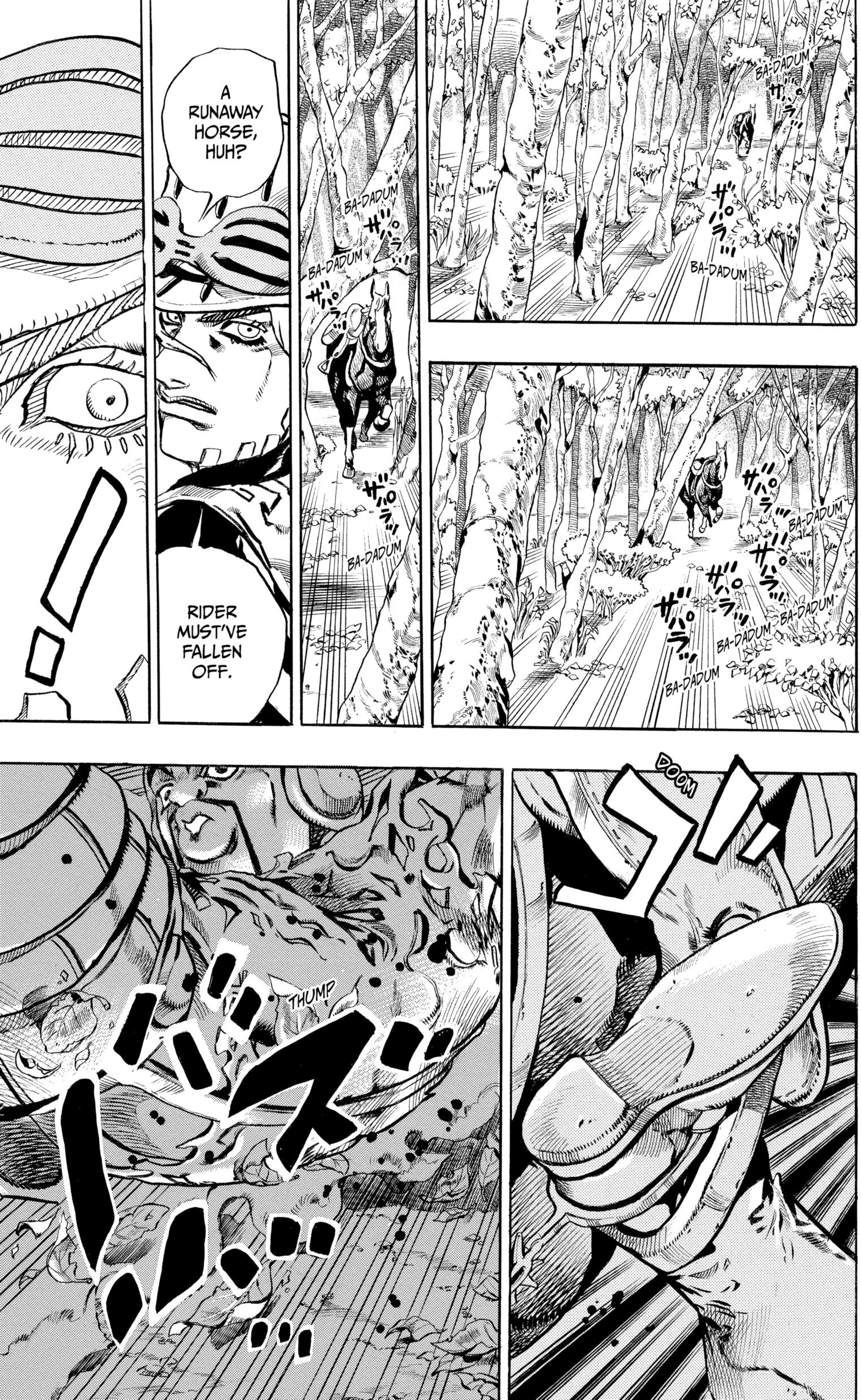

I PASSED HIM!
PWING
ド
DO
ド
DO
ド
DO
ド
DO
SMAK
SMAK
SMAK
WOBBL
WOBBL
URGH!
SKRSH
AUGH !!


HUH ?!
WHM
KRUNCH
URK ...
NO...
NO WAY...
B... BUT...

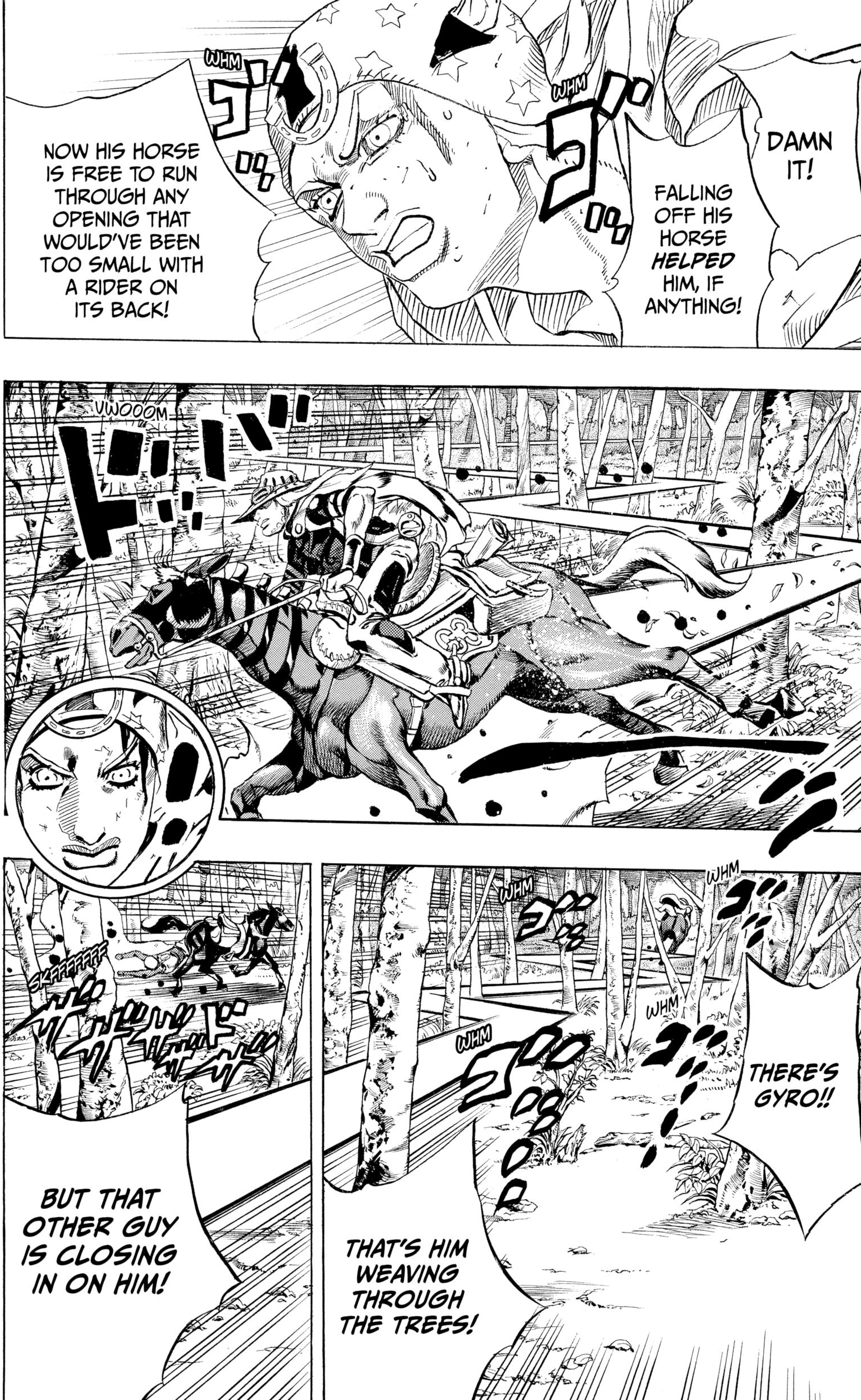

KA-THUD
ドババババ
GAKK!
ズザァ
JUST LIKE I THOUGHT.
HE'S A NOBODY. JUST SOME GUY WHO'S ALL HAT AND NO CATTLE.
ドドドド
DO
DO
DO
DO
DO

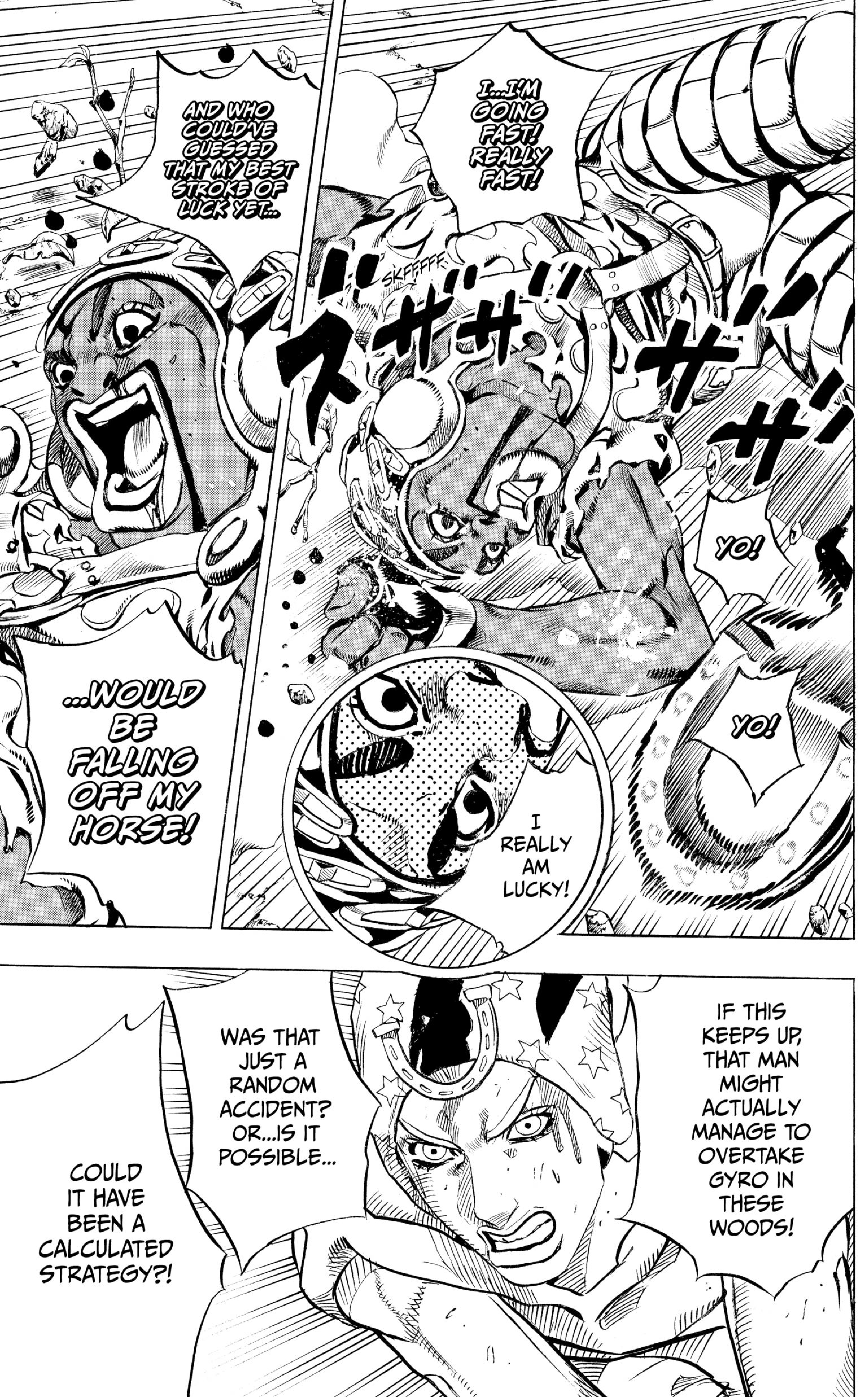

WHM
ゴゴゴゴ
WHM
ゴゴゴゴ
WHM
ゴゴゴゴ
WHM
ゴゴゴゴ
WHM
ゴゴゴゴ
ドバァァァ
VWOOOSH

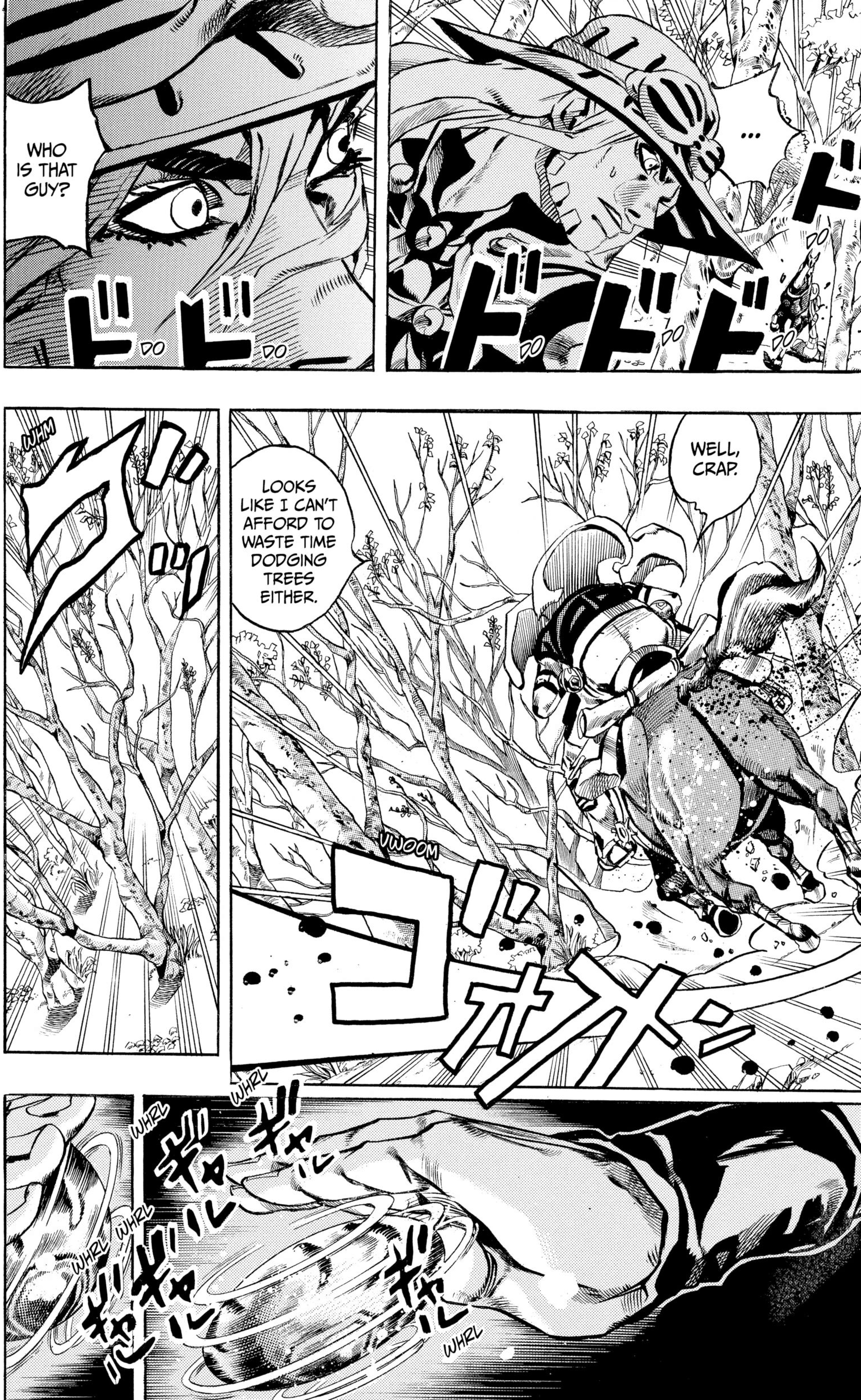

!!
SHF
ザッ
SHF
ザッ
SHF
ザッ
SHF
ザッ
MY MIND MUST BE PLAYING TRICKS ON ME.
SHF
ザッ
SHF
ザッ
I COULD'VE SWORN I FELT SOMEONE BEHIND ME.
NO, I WAS RIGHT...!
SHF
ザッ
SHF
ザッ
SHF
ザッ
SHF
ザッ
SHF
ザッ
SHF
ザッ

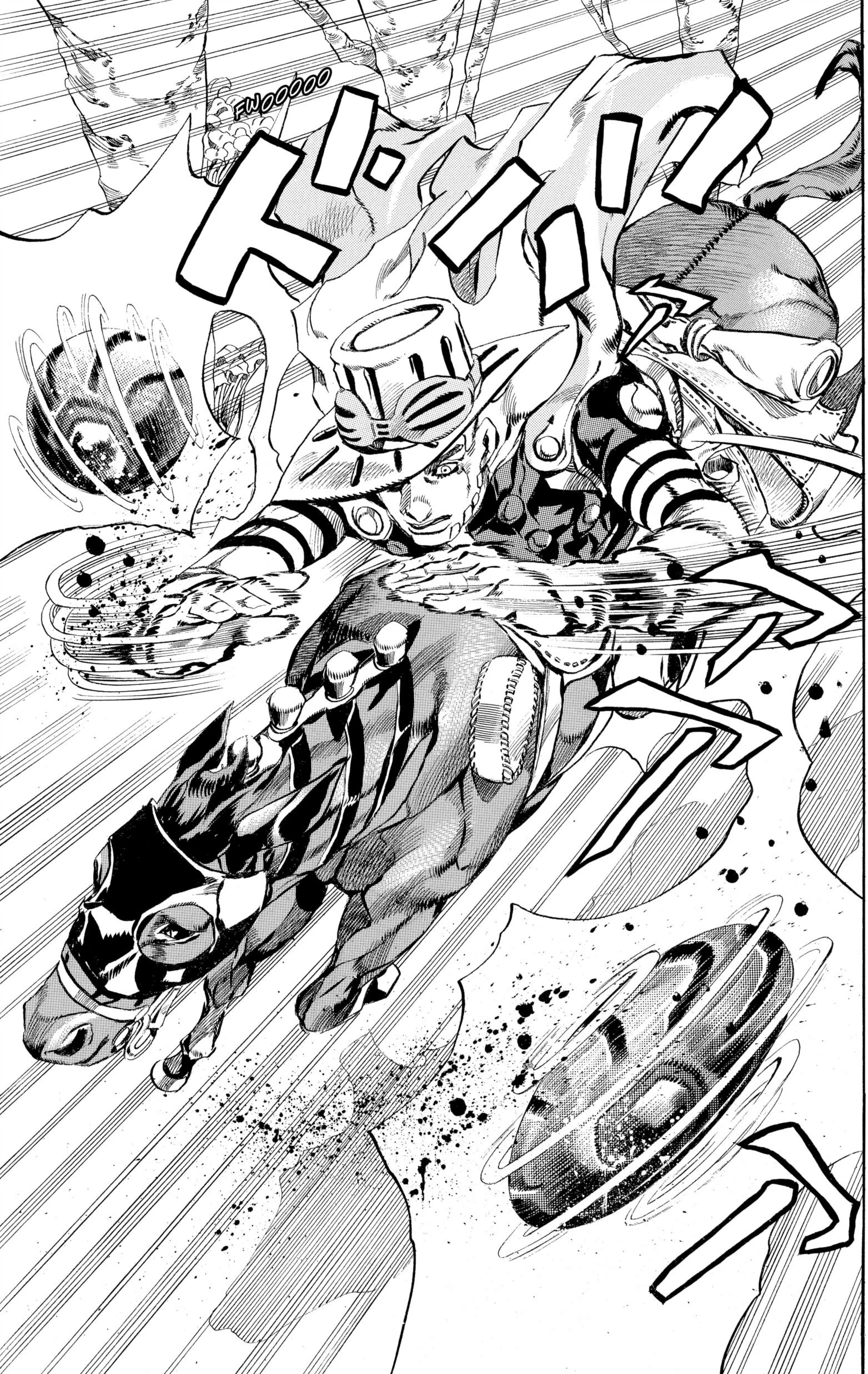

BA-DADUM
ザパラッ
ザパラッ
BA-DADUM
ザパラッ
BA-DADUM
ザパラッ
BA-DADUM
ザパラッ
BA-DADUM
ザパラッ
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
ザパラッ
ザパラッ
BA-DADUM
BA-DADUM
A RUNAWAY HORSE, HUH?
RIDER MUST'VE FALLEN OFF.
!
DOOM
ゴッ
THUMP
ドズッ

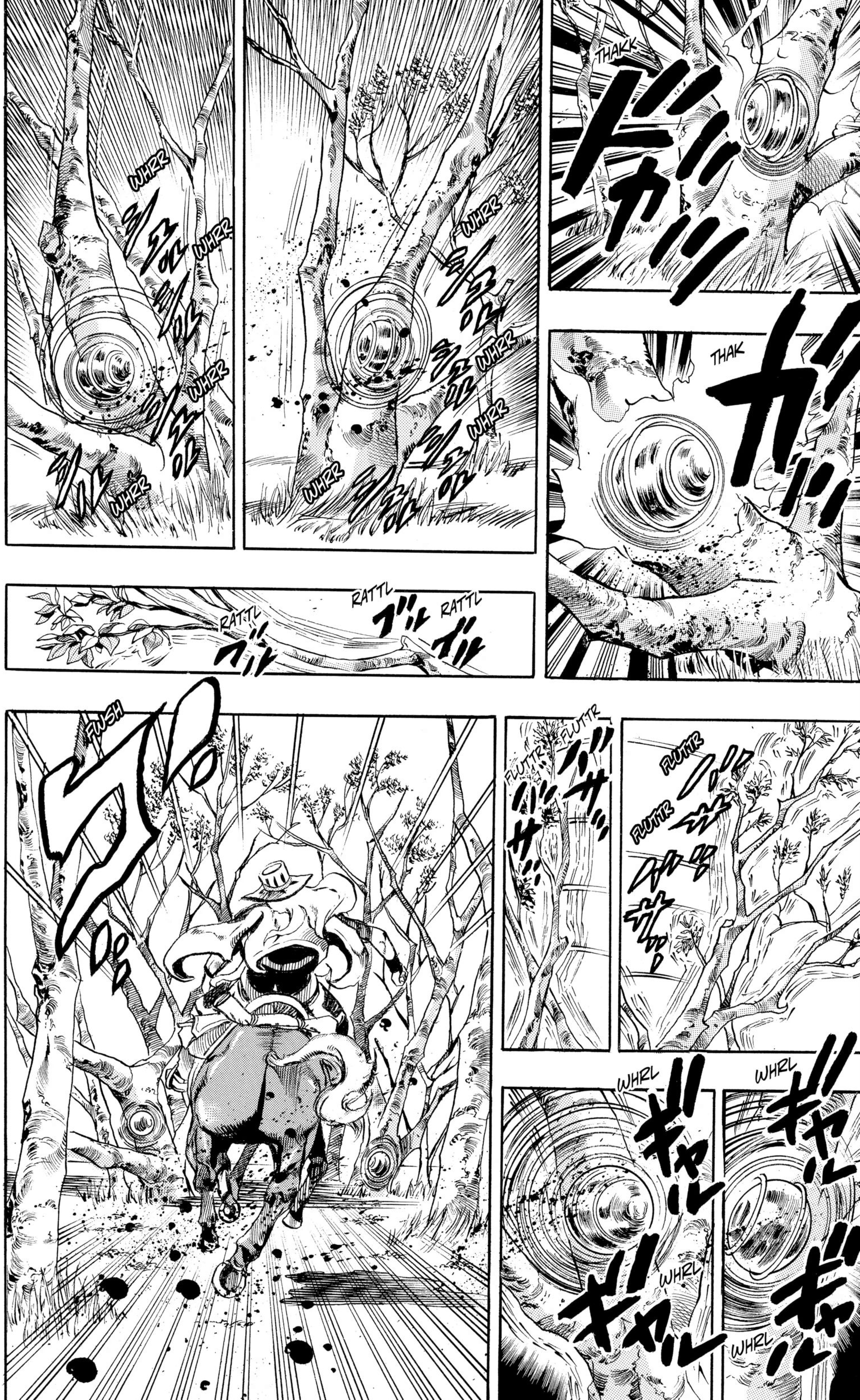
SKFFFF
SKFFFF
AAA
AAA
AAA
AAA
AAA
AHH
!!
VWOOM
TH- THIS GUY!
WHM
GAH.
OH NO!
HE'S CUTTING STRAIGHT THROUGH THE OPENINGS BETWEEN THE BRANCHES!
I CAN'T KEEP UP! HE'S PULLING FARTHER AHEAD OF ME!
SKFFFFF
AAAA
AAAA
AAAH!

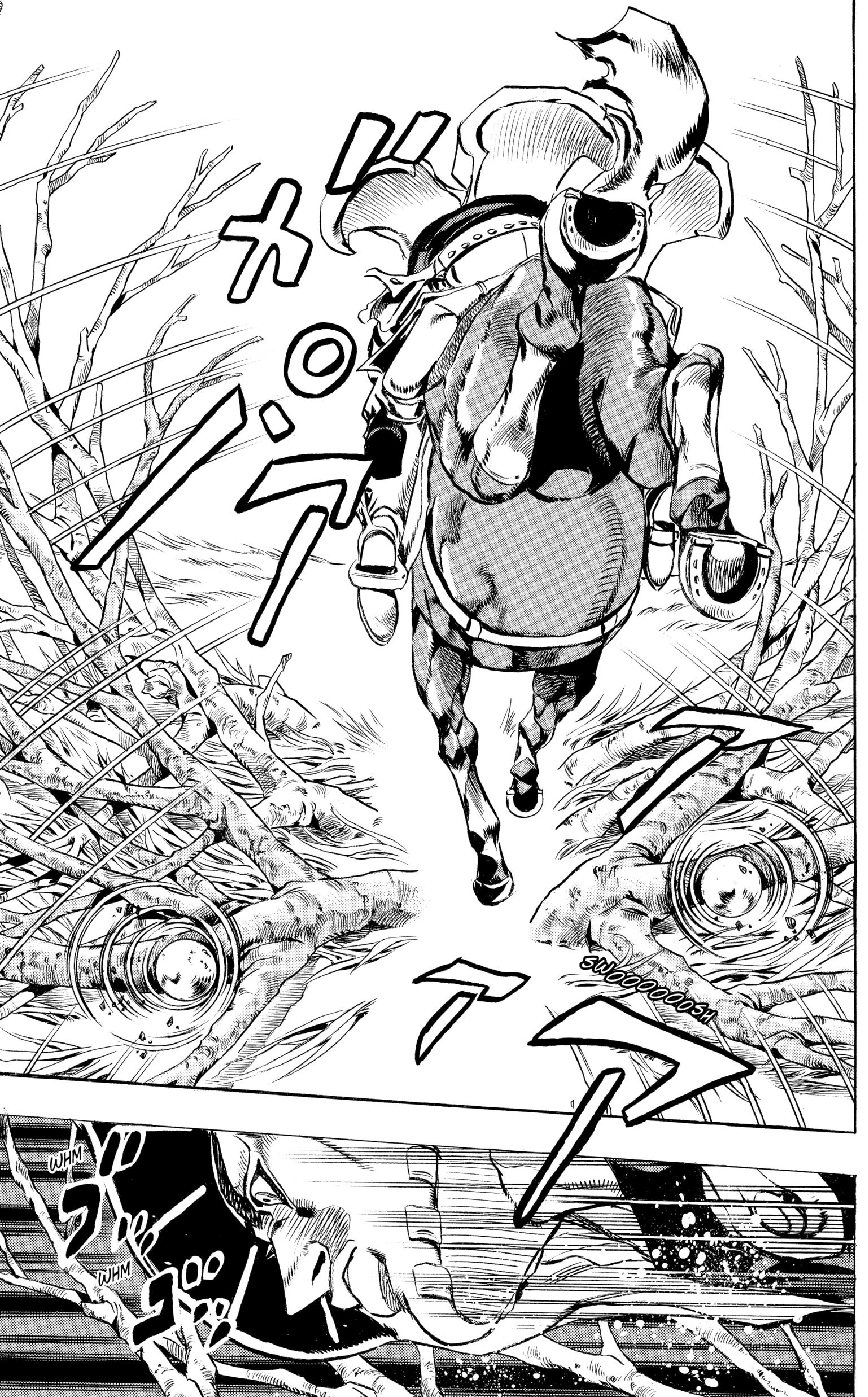

WHM
WHM
DAMN IT!
FALLING OFF HIS HORSE *HELPED* HIM, IF ANYTHING!
NOW HIS HORSE IS FREE TO RUN THROUGH ANY OPENING THAT WOULD'VE BEEN TOO SMALL WITH A RIDER ON ITS BACK!
VWOOOM
WHM
WHM
WHM
WHM
THERE'S GYRO!!
THAT'S HIM WEAVING THROUGH THE TREES!
SKRFFFFFF
BUT THAT OTHER GUY IS CLOSING IN ON HIM!

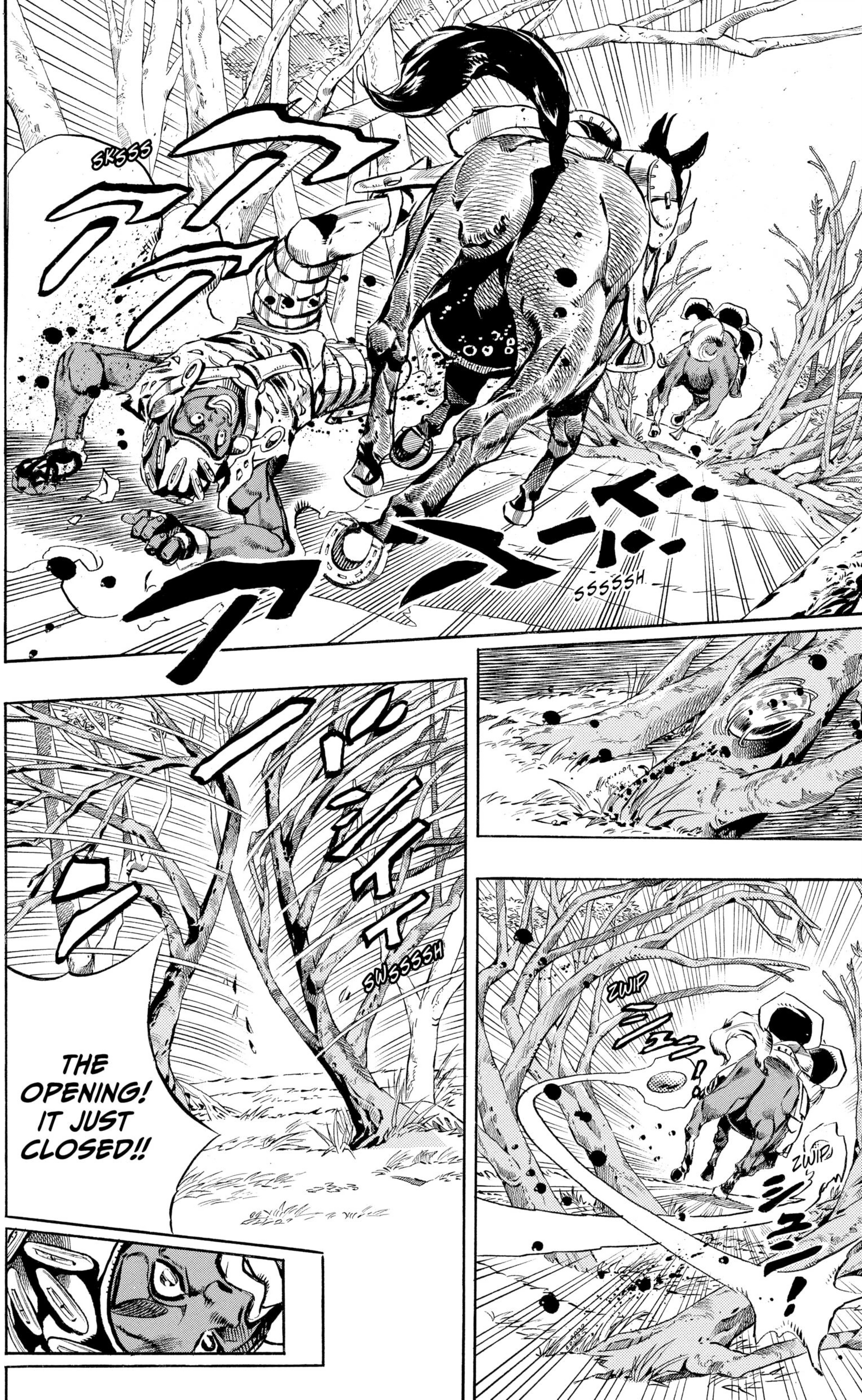

I...I'M GOING FAST! REALLY FAST!
SKFFFFF
スザザ
ザザ
YO!
YO!
I REALLY AM LUCKY!
AND WHO COULD'VE GUESSED THAT MY BEST STROKE OF LUCK YET...
...WOULD BE FALLING OFF MY HORSE!
WAS THAT JUST A RANDOM ACCIDENT? OR...IS IT POSSIBLE...
COULD IT HAVE BEEN A CALCULATED STRATEGY?!
IF THIS KEEPS UP, THAT MAN MIGHT ACTUALLY MANAGE TO OVERTAKE GYRO IN THESE WOODS!

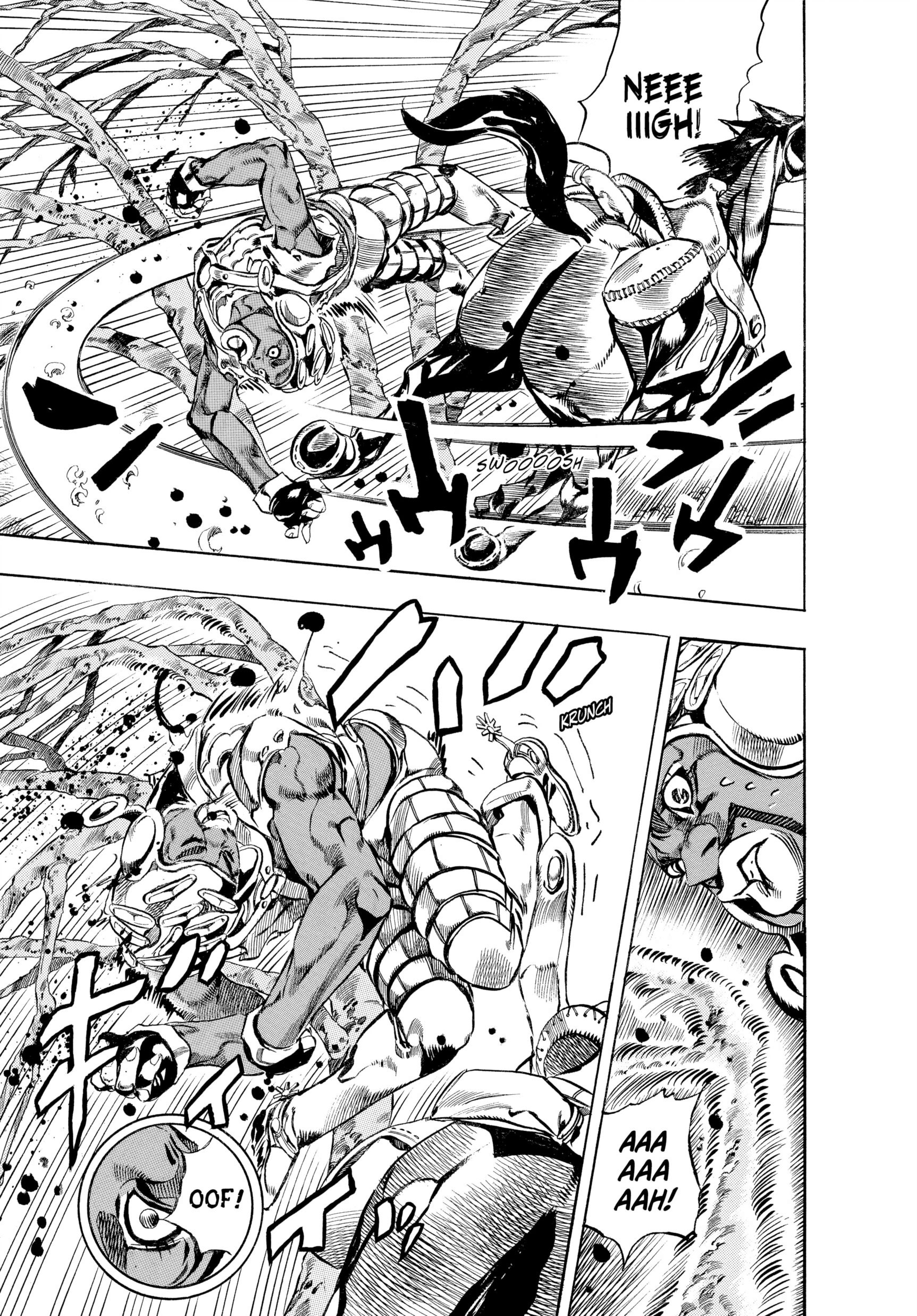

...
DO
DO
DO
WHO IS THAT GUY?
DO
DO
WELL, CRAP.
LOOKS LIKE I CAN'T AFFORD TO WASTE TIME DODGING TREES EITHER.
VWOOM
WHM
WHRL
WHRL
WHRL
WHRL
WHRL
WHRL


FWOOOOO
ドドーン

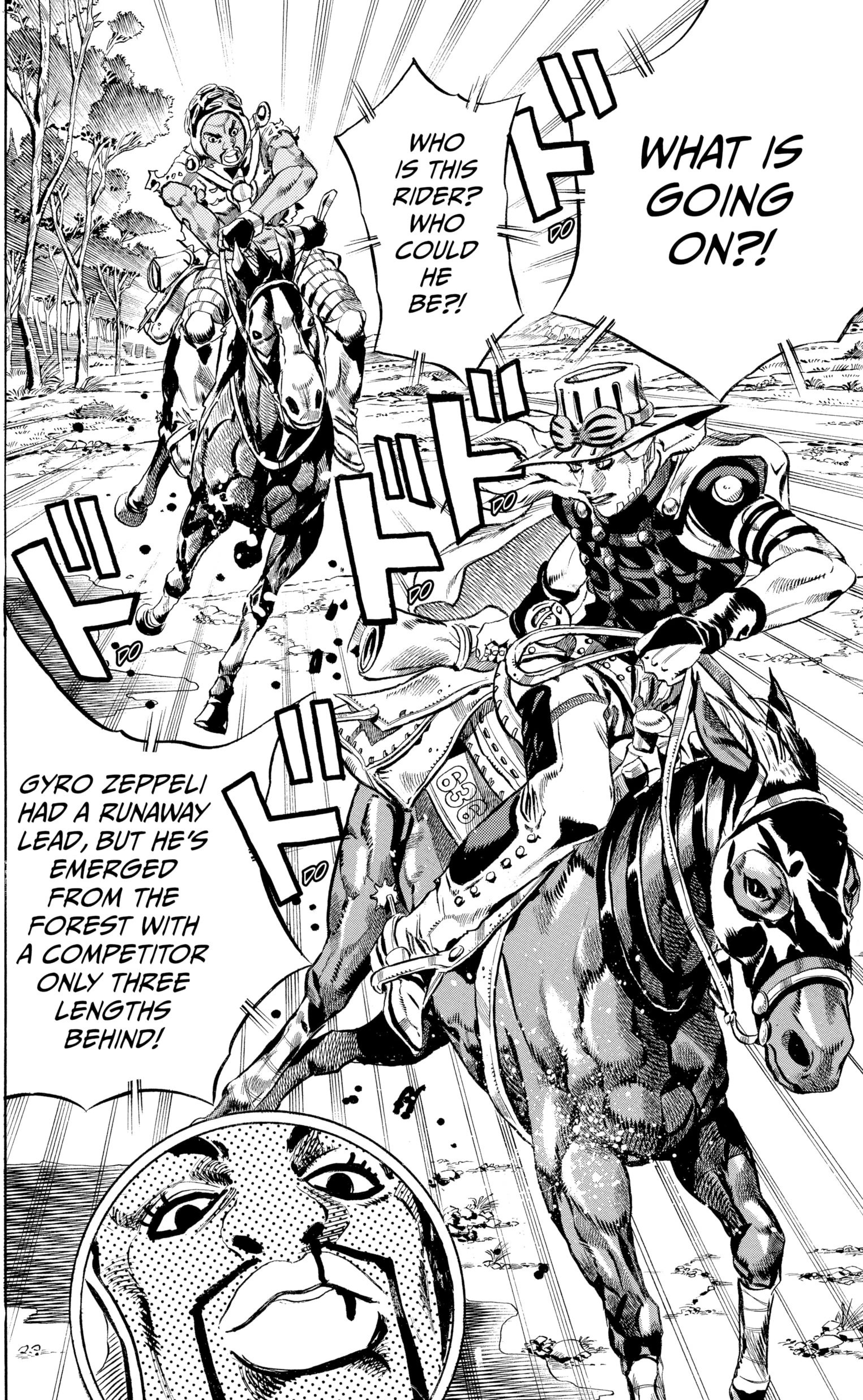

THAKK
ドカッッ
THAK
ガッ
WHRR
WHRR
WHRR
WHRR
WHRR
WHRR
WHRR
WHRR
RATTL
RATTL
RATTL
ブル
ブル
ブル
FLUTTR
FLUTTR
バサ
バサ
FLUTTR
FLUTTR
FWSH
WHRL
ギャル
ギャル
WHRL
ギャル
WHRL
WHRL

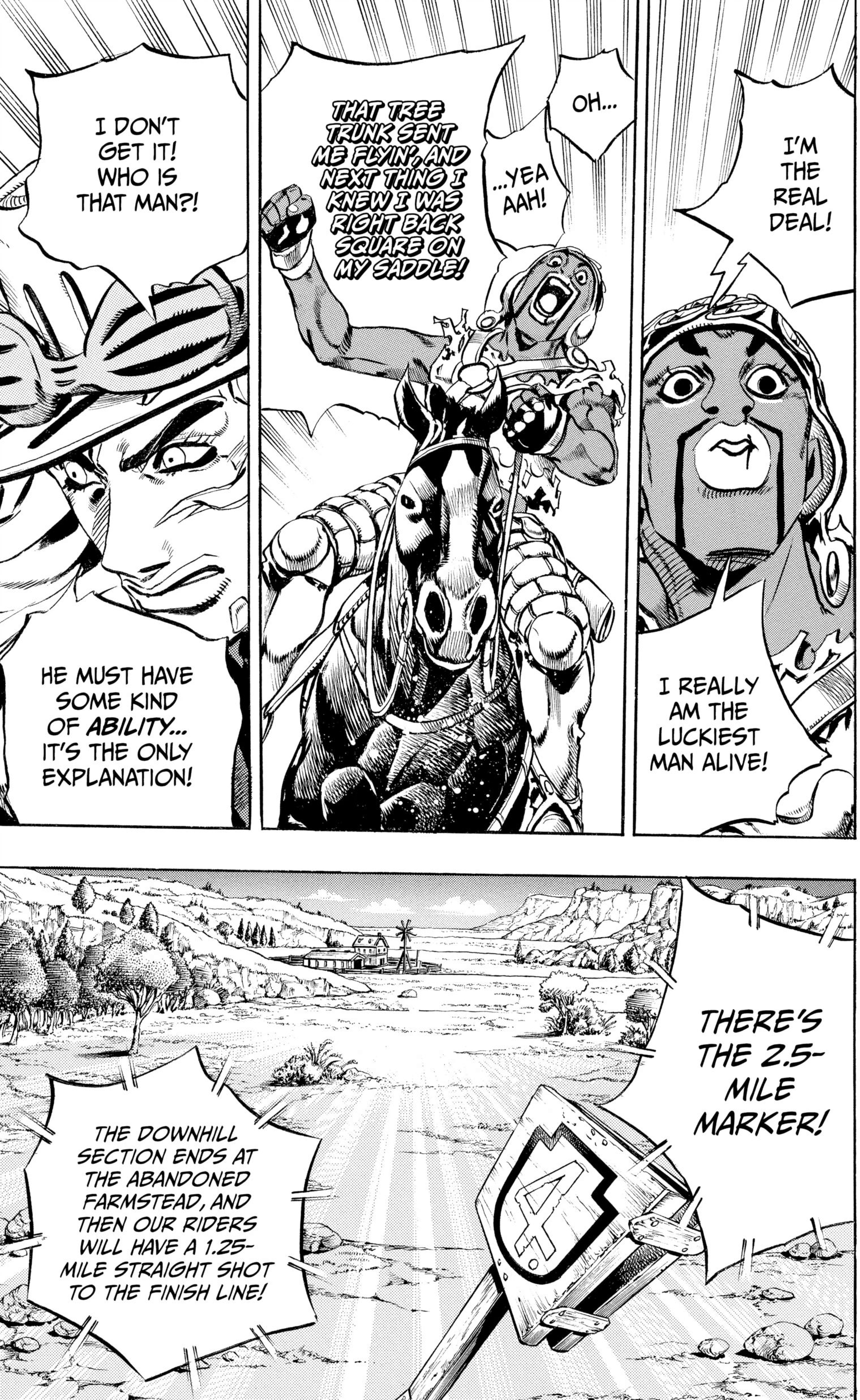

ドカパァァァ
SWOOOOOOOSH
WHM
ブン
WHM
ブン

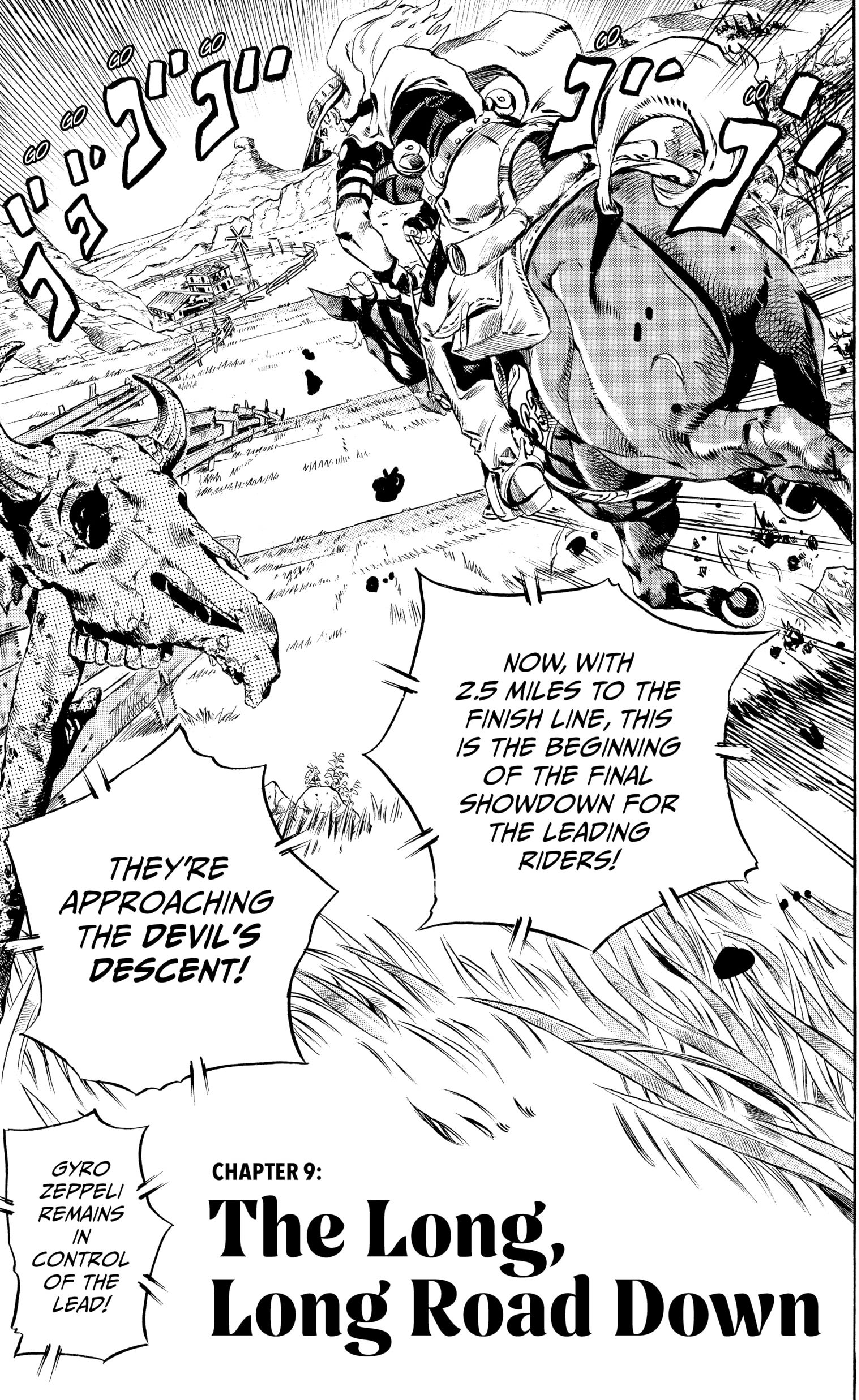

SKSSS
SSSSSH
SWSSSSH
THE OPENING! IT JUST CLOSED!!
ZWIP
ZWIP


NEEE IIIGH!
SWOOOOSH
AAA AAA AAH!
KRUNCH
OOF!

HOLY SMOKES!
A RIDER HAS JUST EMERGED FROM THE TREE LINE!
HERE HE COMES!
ドドドド DO DO DO DO
A LONE RIDER IS OUT OF THE WOODS!
IT'S GYRO! GYRO ZEP-PELI!
ドド DO
GYRO ZEPPELI MADE IT OUT! OUR FUGITIVE IS STILL ON THE RUN!
ドドドド DO DO DO DO
WHAT A ROUSING SUCCESS! HIS SHORTCUT GAMBIT PAID OFF!
HE'S EXPANDED HIS LEAD AHEAD OF THE REST OF THE PACK TO A GOOD HALF MILE.
BUT WAIT! IS THAT WHAT I THINK IT IS?!
THERE'S ANOTHER RIDER!
ドドドドドドド DO DO DO DO DO DO DO
ANOTHER RIDER HAS MADE IT OUT OF OF THE WOODS!
ドドドドド DO DO DO DO DO
HE'S ONLY FIVE LENGTHS BEHIND GYRO!
HE'S CLOSING IN FAST!
NO, THREE!

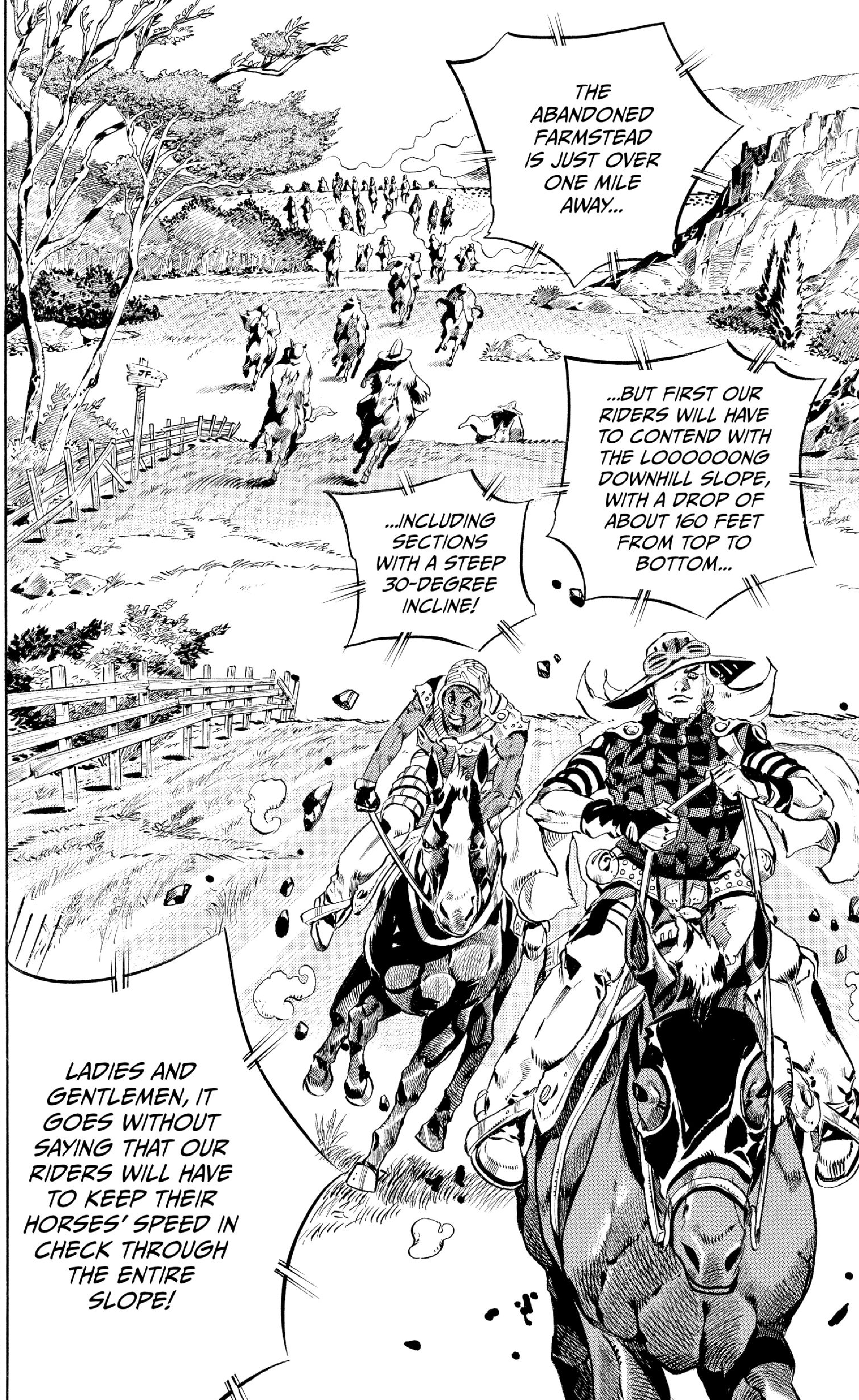

WHAT IS GOING ON?!
WHO IS THIS RIDER? WHO COULD HE BE?!
ドド DO
ドド DO
ドド DO
ドド DO
ドド DO
GYRO ZEPPELI HAD A RUNAWAY LEAD, BUT HE'S EMERGED FROM THE FOREST WITH A COMPETITOR ONLY THREE LENGTHS BEHIND!
636

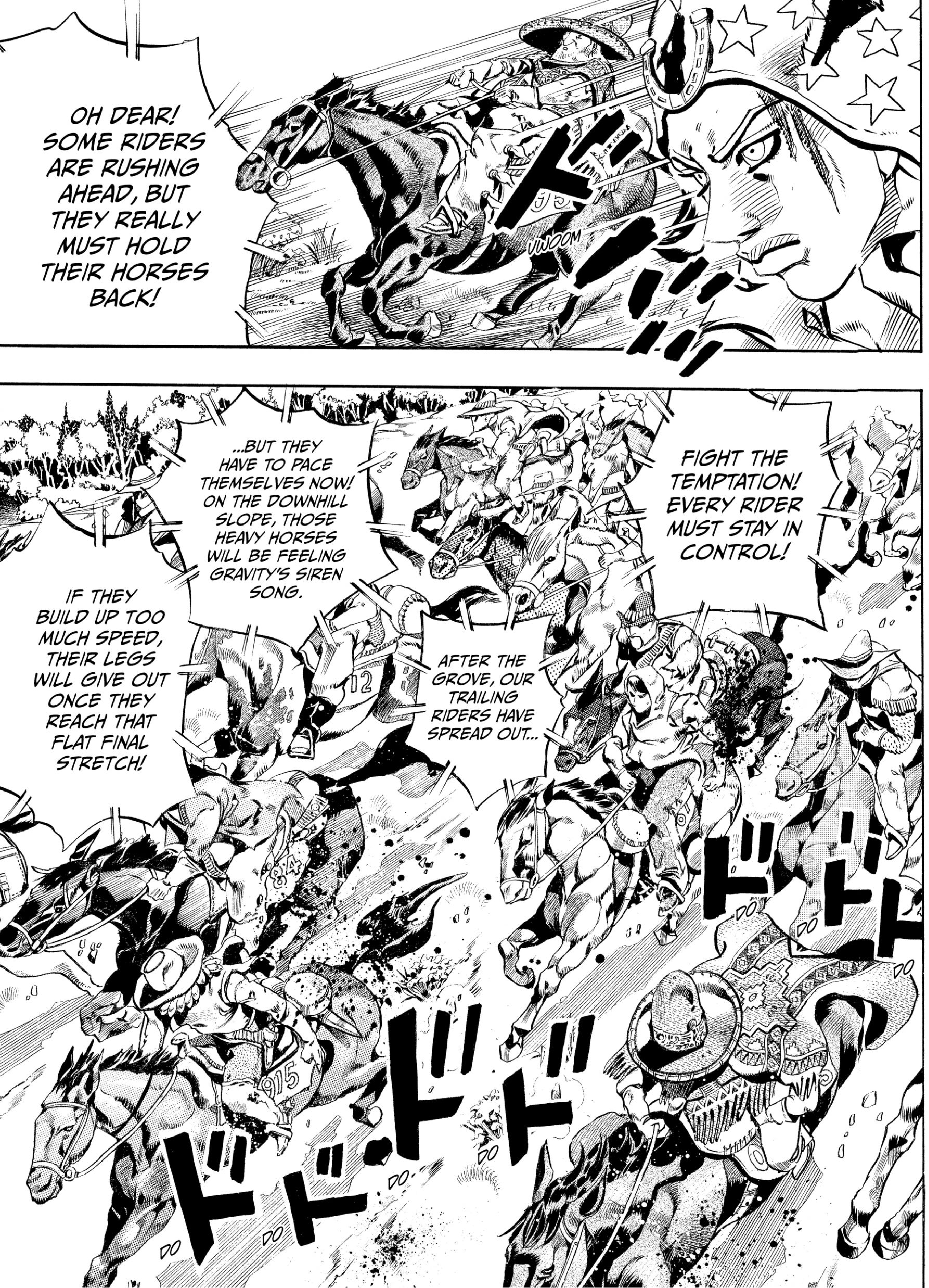

I'M THE REAL DEAL!
I REALLY AM THE LUCKIEST MAN ALIVE!
OH...
...YEAAAH!
THAT TREE TRUNK SENT ME FLYIN', AND NEXT THING I KNEW I WAS RIGHT BACK SQUARE ON MY SADDLE!
I DON'T GET IT! WHO IS THAT MAN?!
HE MUST HAVE SOME KIND OF **ABILITY**... IT'S THE ONLY EXPLANATION!
THERE'S THE 2.5-MILE MARKER!
THE DOWNHILL SECTION ENDS AT THE ABANDONED FARMSTEAD, AND THEN OUR RIDERS WILL HAVE A 1.25-MILE STRAIGHT SHOT TO THE FINISH LINE!
4

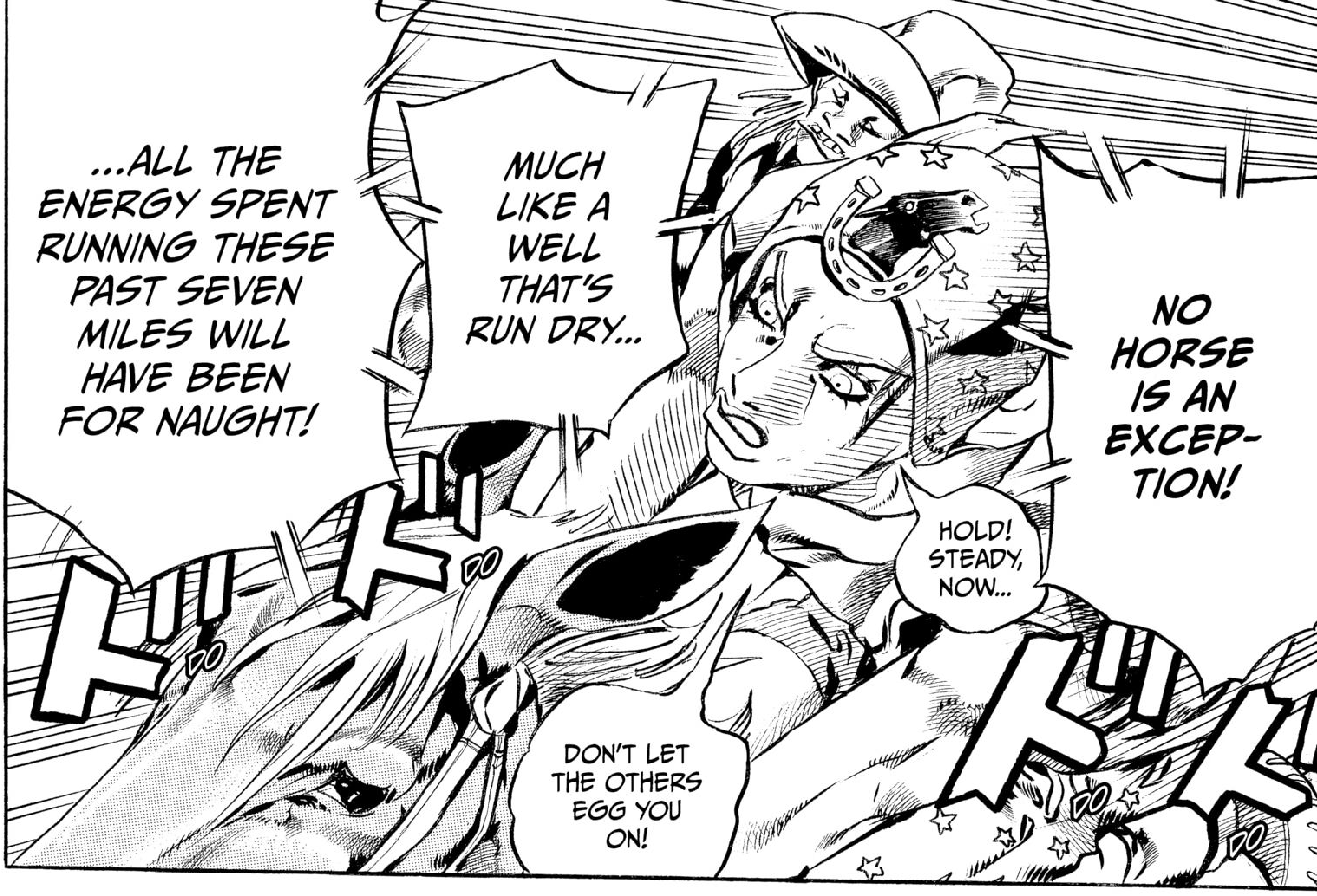

ゴゴ GO GO
ゴゴゴゴ GO GO GO GO
NOW, WITH 2.5 MILES TO THE FINISH LINE, THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE FINAL SHOWDOWN FOR THE LEADING RIDERS!
THEY'RE APPROACHING THE DEVIL'S DESCENT!
GYRO ZEPPELI REMAINS IN CONTROL OF THE LEAD!

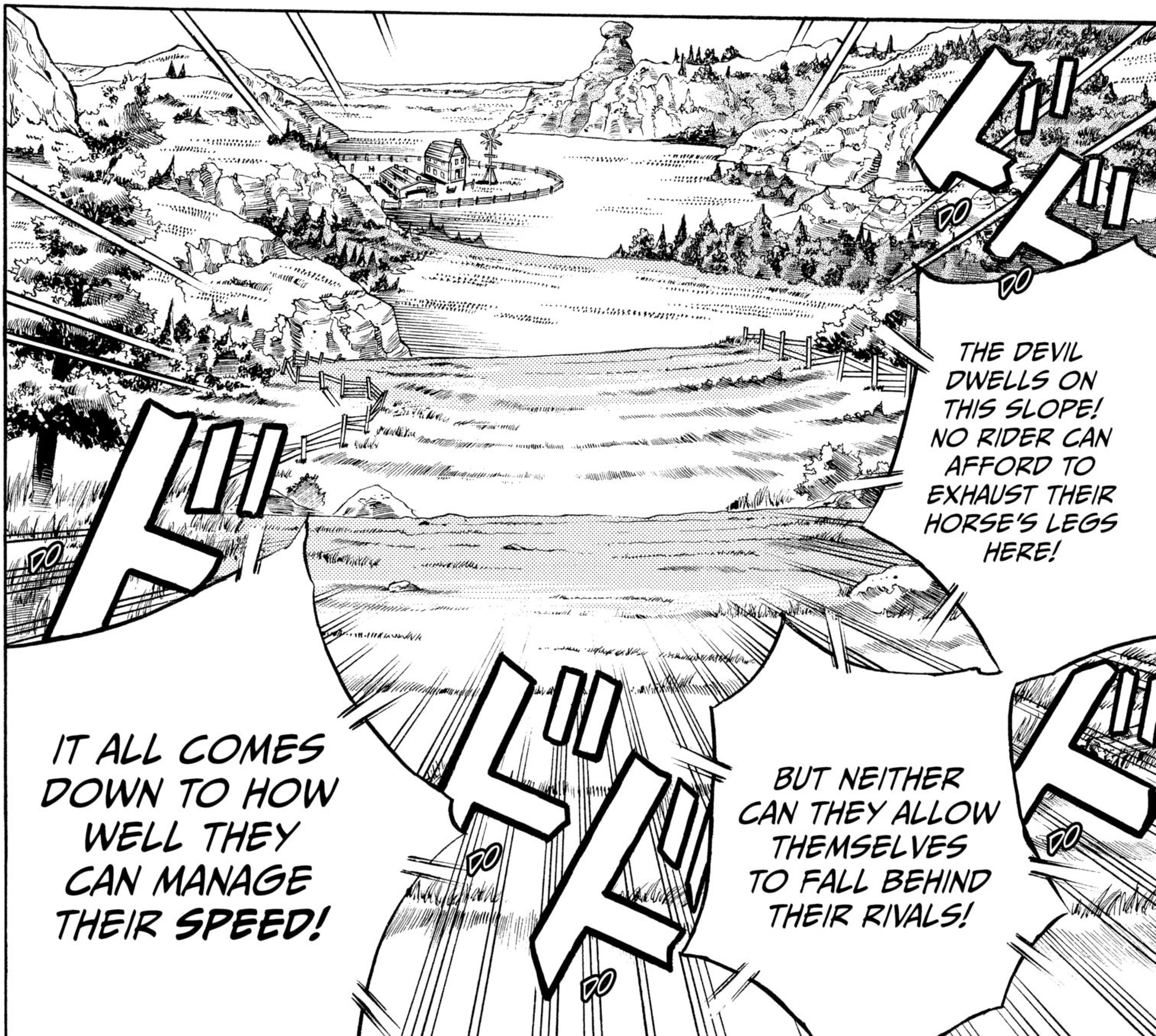
CHAPTER 9:

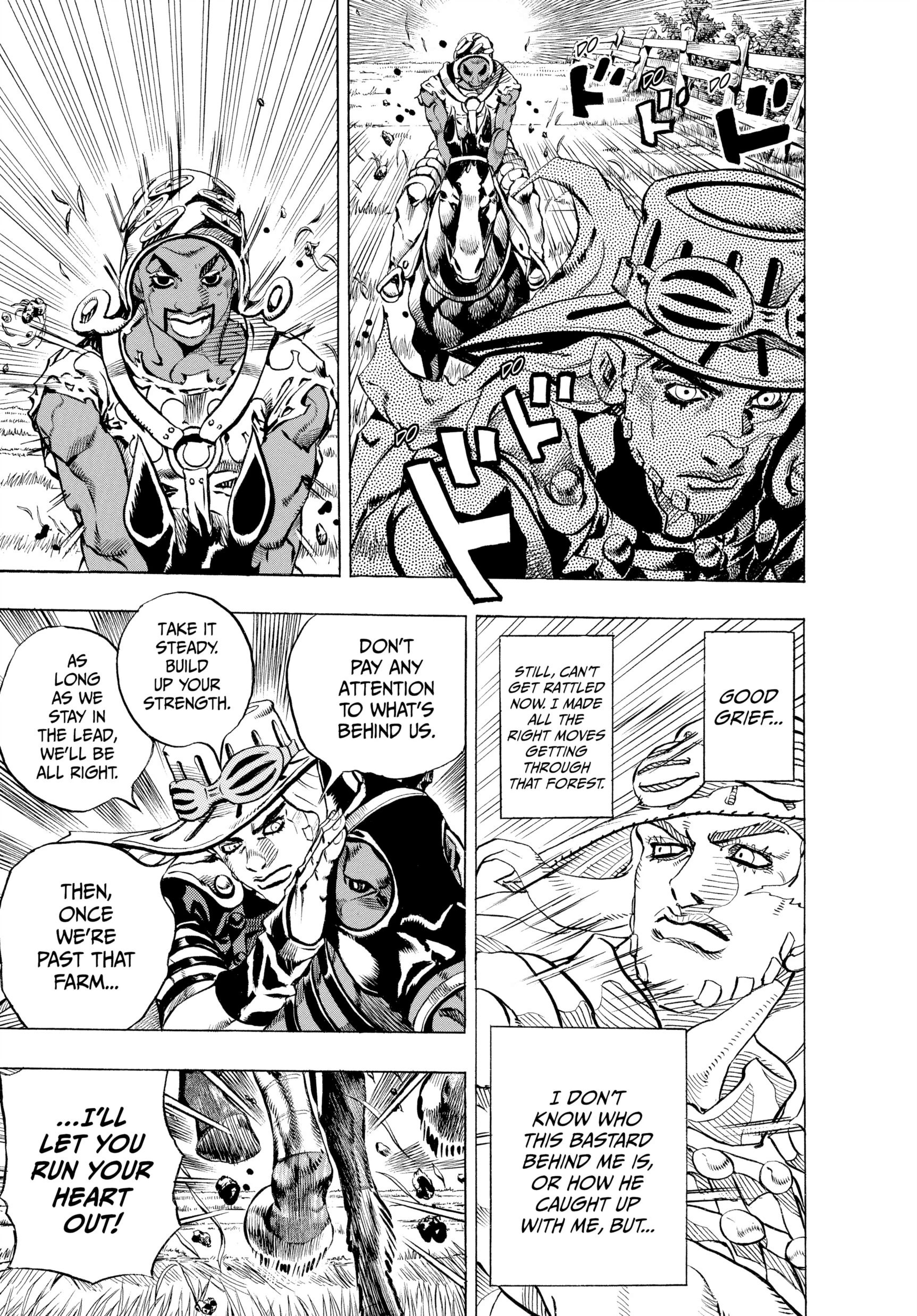
The Long, Long Road Down

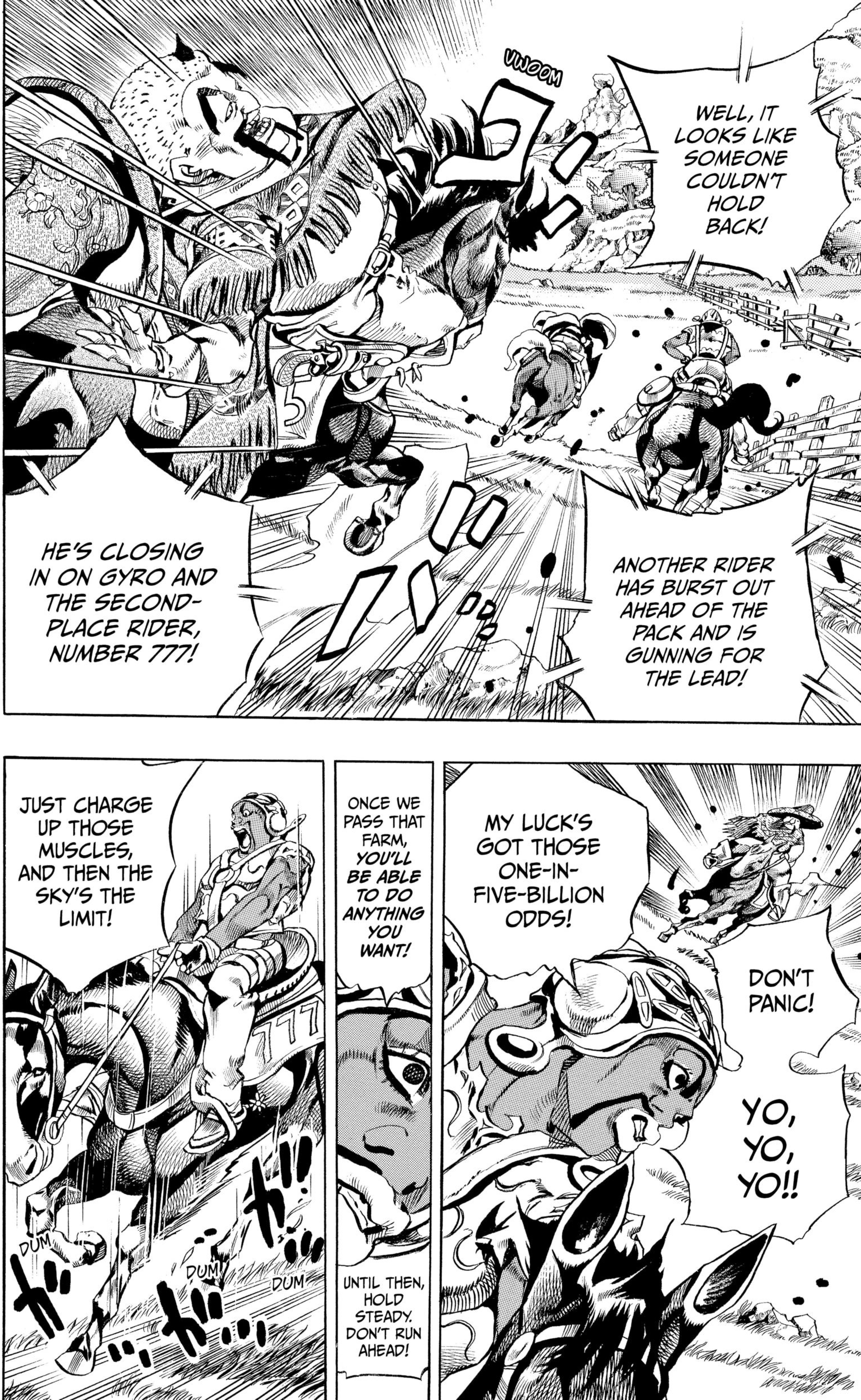

THE ABANDONED FARMSTEAD IS JUST OVER ONE MILE AWAY...
...BUT FIRST OUR RIDERS WILL HAVE TO CONTEND WITH THE LOOOOOONG DOWNHILL SLOPE, WITH A DROP OF ABOUT 160 FEET FROM TOP TO BOTTOM...
...INCLUDING SECTIONS WITH A STEEP 30-DEGREE INCLINE!
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT OUR RIDERS WILL HAVE TO KEEP THEIR HORSES' SPEED IN CHECK THROUGH THE ENTIRE SLOPE!

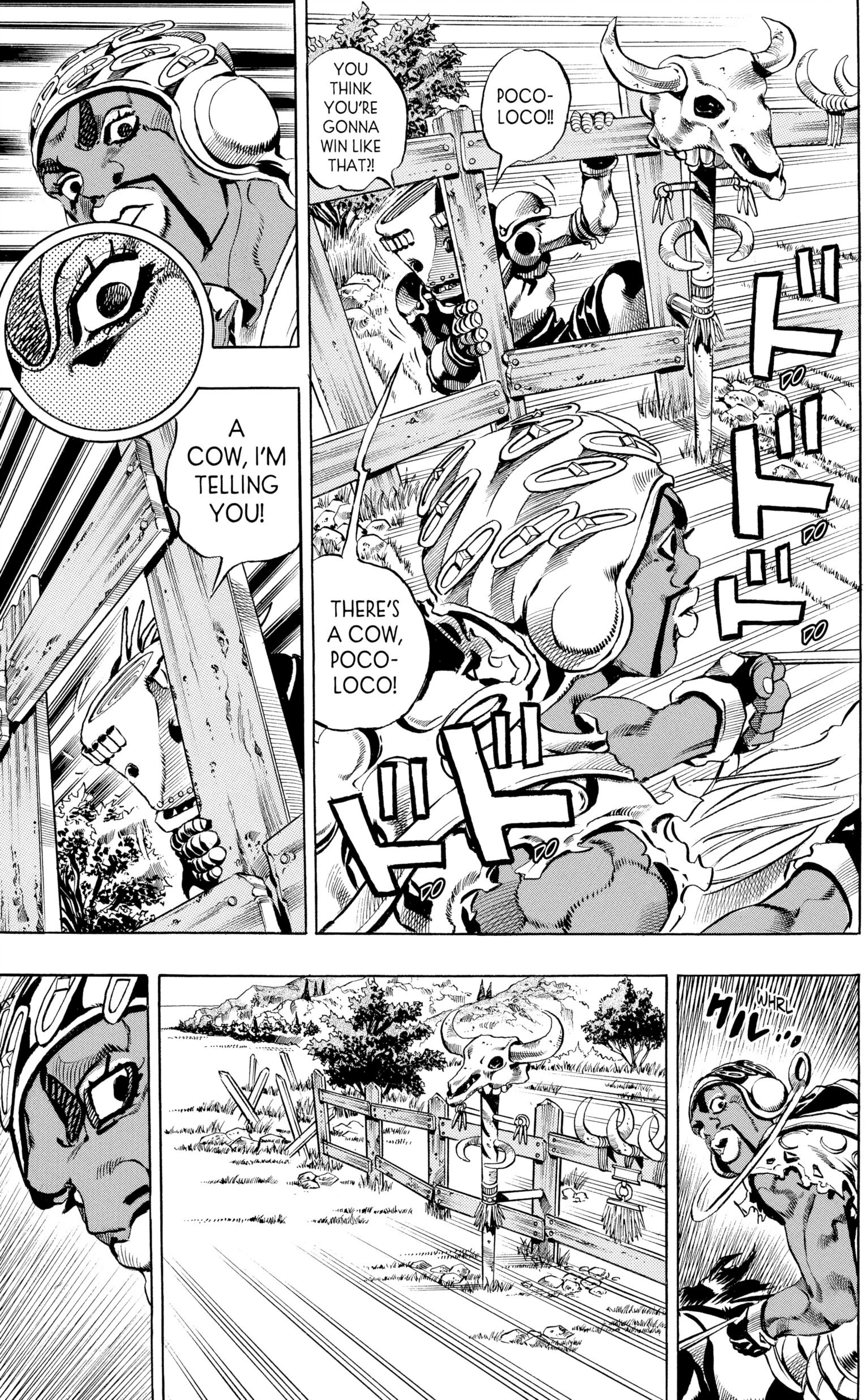

OH DEAR! SOME RIDERS ARE RUSHING AHEAD, BUT THEY REALLY MUST HOLD THEIR HORSES BACK!
ドドドド
VWOOM
FIGHT THE TEMPTATION! EVERY RIDER MUST STAY IN CONTROL!
...BUT THEY HAVE TO PACE THEMSELVES NOW! ON THE DOWNHILL SLOPE, THOSE HEAVY HORSES WILL BE FEELING GRAVITY'S SIREN SONG.
AFTER THE GROVE, OUR TRAILING RIDERS HAVE SPREAD OUT...
IF THEY BUILD UP TOO MUCH SPEED, THEIR LEGS WILL GIVE OUT ONCE THEY REACH THAT FLAT FINAL STRETCH!
ドドドド
ドドドド
DO DO DO DO DO DO

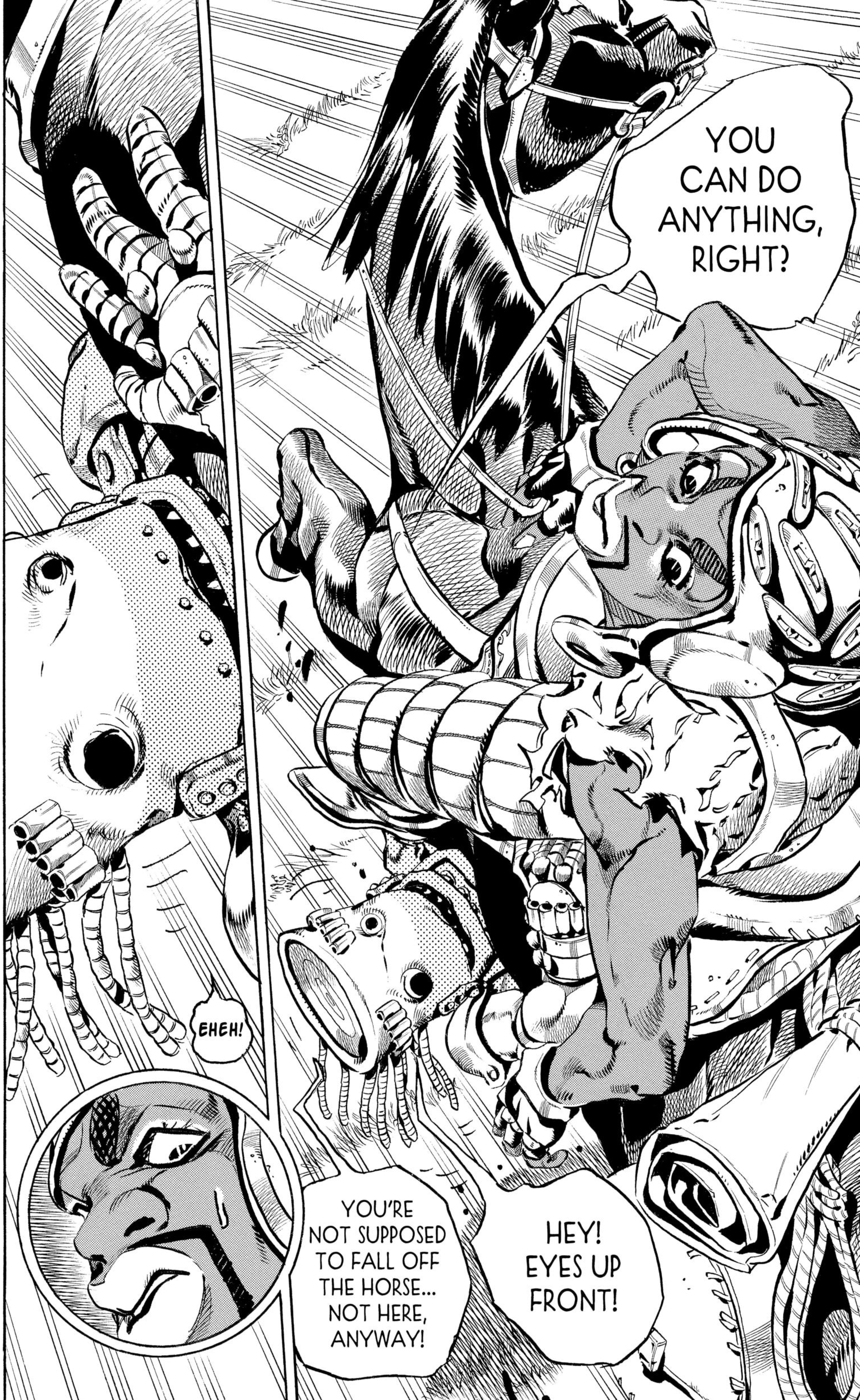

NO HORSE IS AN EXCEPTION!
HOLD! STEADY, NOW...
MUCH LIKE A WELL THAT'S RUN DRY...
...ALL THE ENERGY SPENT RUNNING THESE PAST SEVEN MILES WILL HAVE BEEN FOR NAUGHT!
DON'T LET THE OTHERS EGG YOU ON!
ドドド DO DO DO
ドド DO DO

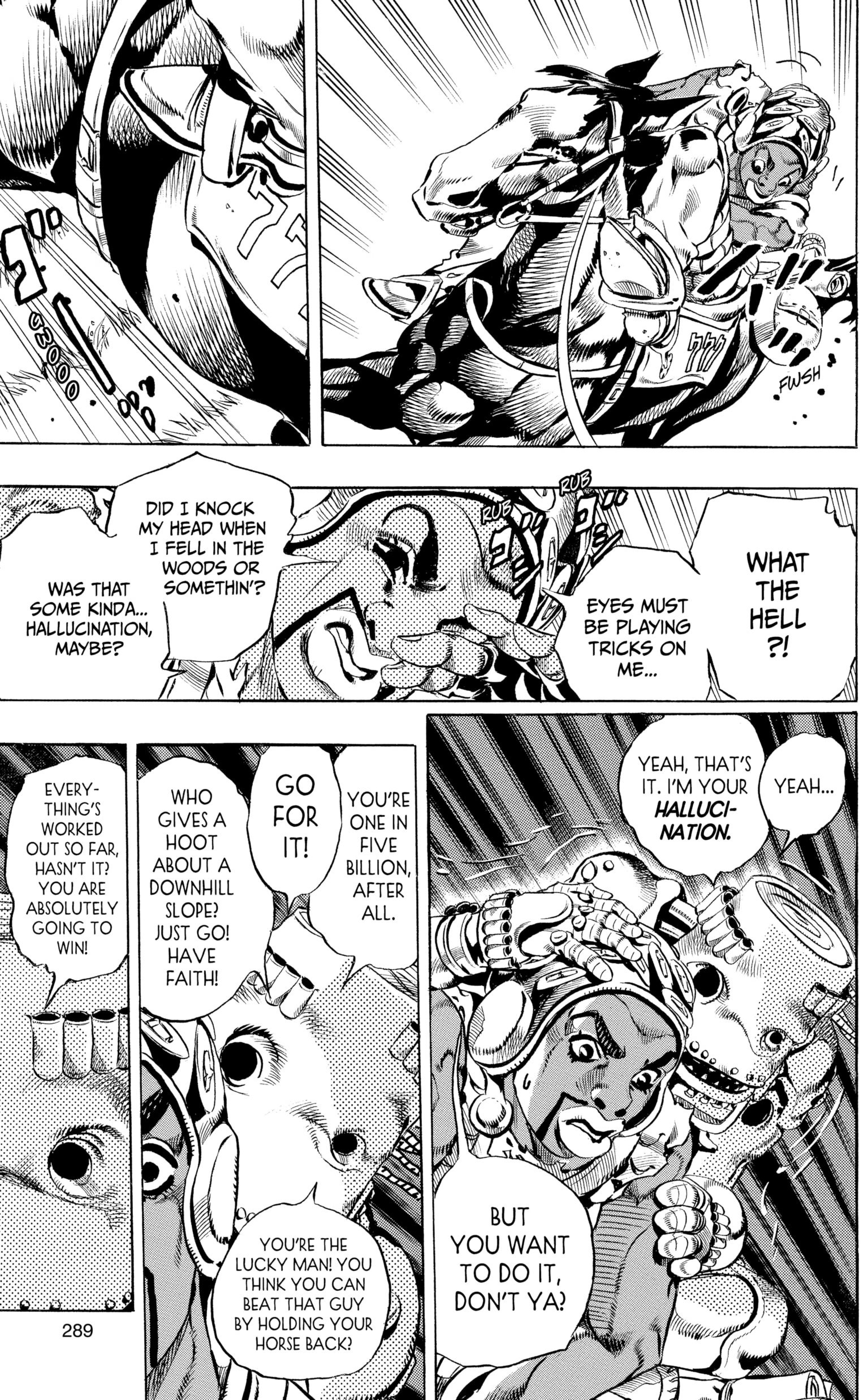

ドドド DO DO DO
THE DEVIL DWELLS ON THIS SLOPE! NO RIDER CAN AFFORD TO EXHAUST THEIR HORSE'S LEGS HERE!
BUT NEITHER CAN THEY ALLOW THEMSELVES TO FALL BEHIND THEIR RIVALS!
ドドド DO DO
IT ALL COMES DOWN TO HOW WELL THEY CAN MANAGE THEIR SPEED!
ド DO

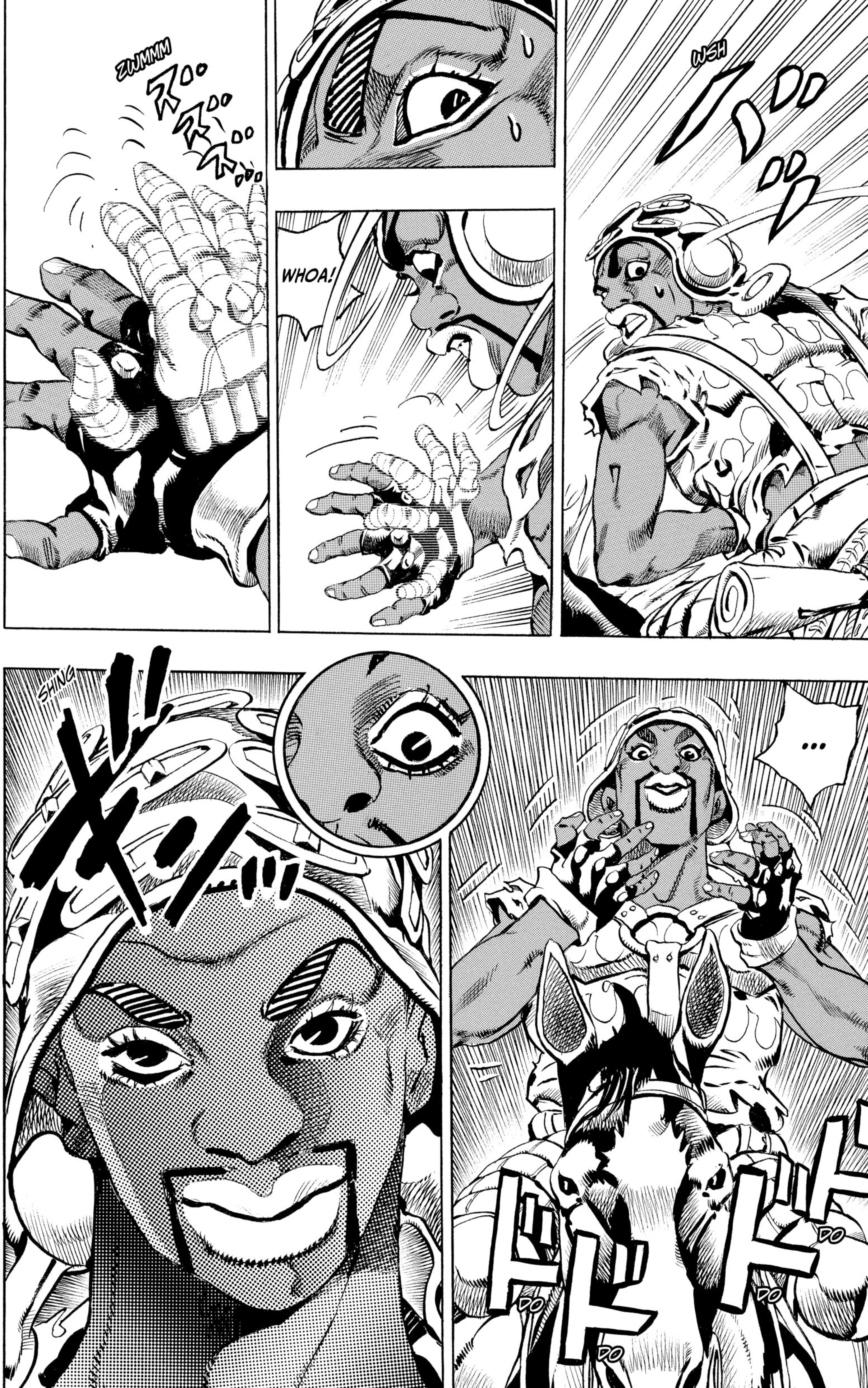

DO ド
DO ド
DO ド
DO ド
DO ド
DO ド
GOOD GRIEF...
STILL, CAN'T GET RATTLED NOW. I MADE ALL THE RIGHT MOVES GETTING THROUGH THAT FOREST.
DON'T PAY ANY ATTENTION TO WHAT'S BEHIND US.
TAKE IT STEADY. BUILD UP YOUR STRENGTH.
AS LONG AS WE STAY IN THE LEAD, WE'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
THEN, ONCE WE'RE PAST THAT FARM...
I DON'T KNOW WHO THIS BASTARD BEHIND ME IS, OR HOW HE CAUGHT UP WITH ME, BUT...
...I'LL LET YOU RUN YOUR HEART OUT!

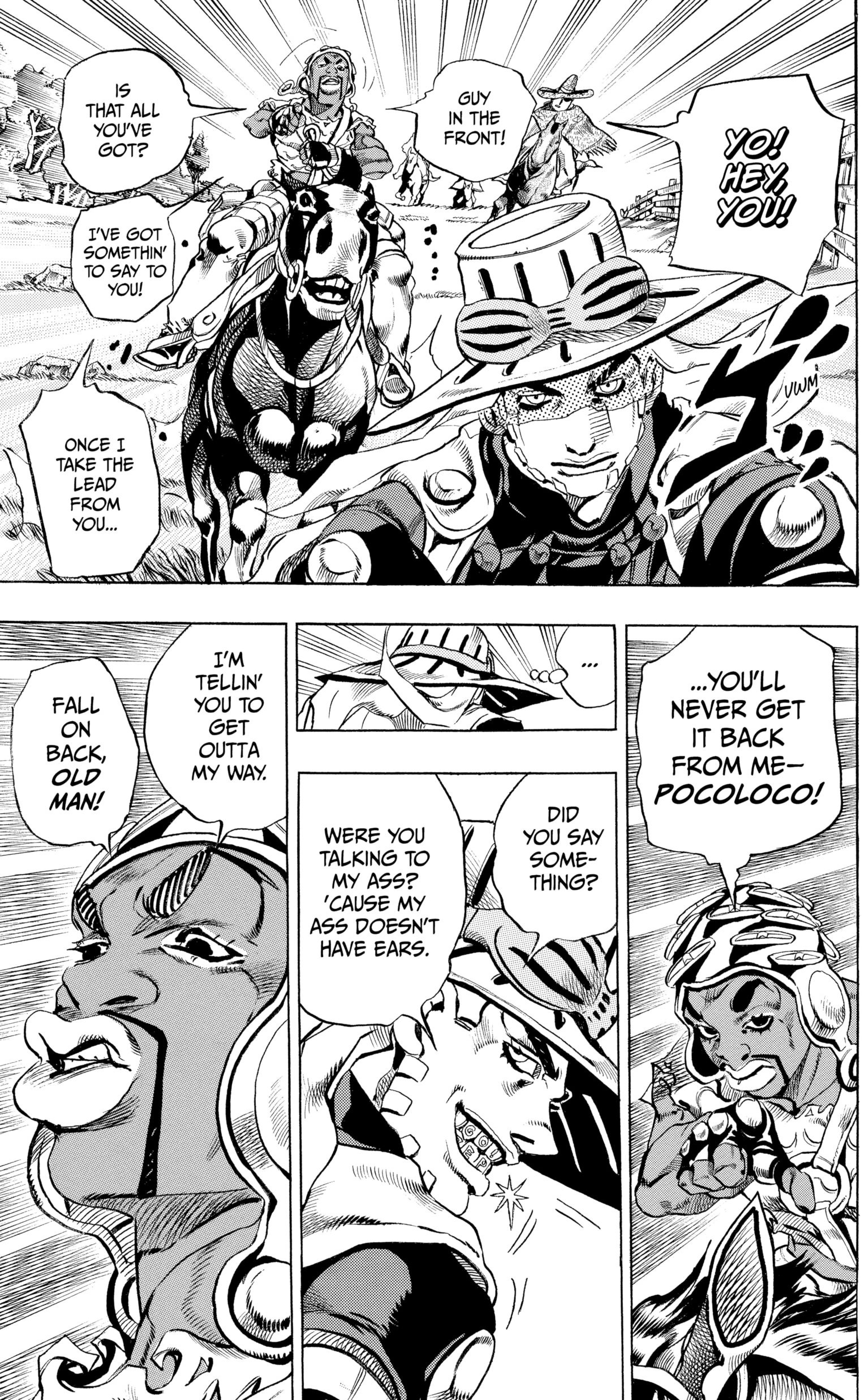

VWOOM
WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE COULDN'T HOLD BACK!
ANOTHER RIDER HAS BURST OUT AHEAD OF THE PACK AND IS GUNNING FOR THE LEAD!
HE'S CLOSING IN ON GYRO AND THE SECOND-PLACE RIDER, NUMBER 777!
MY LUCK'S GOT THOSE ONE-IN-FIVE-BILLION ODDS!
DON'T PANIC!
YO, YO, YO!!
ONCE WE PASS THAT FARM, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING YOU WANT!
UNTIL THEN, HOLD STEADY. DON'T RUN AHEAD!
JUST CHARGE UP THOSE MUSCLES, AND THEN THE SKY'S THE LIMIT!
DUM
DUM
DUM

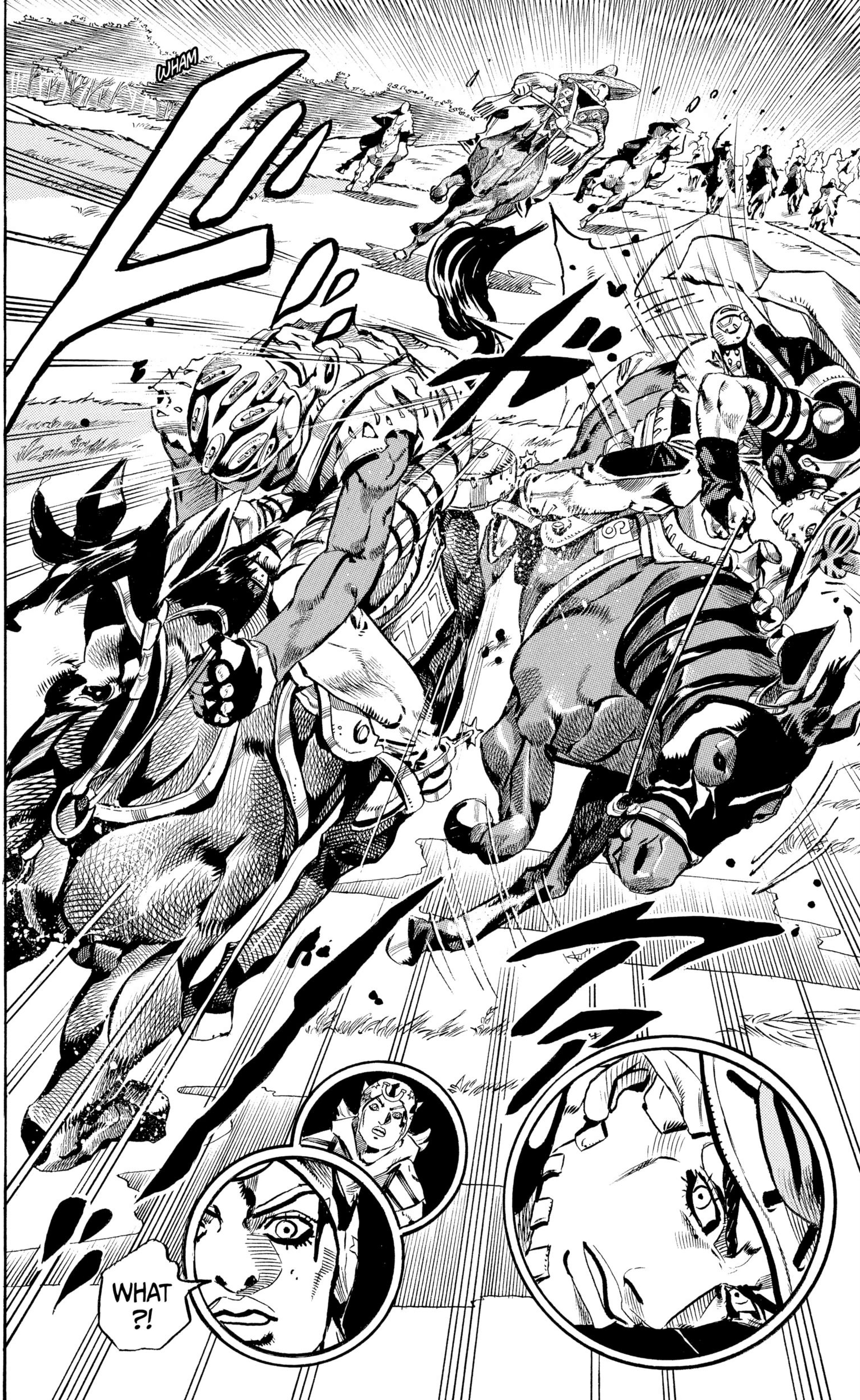

POCO-LOCO!!
YOU THINK YOU'RE GONNA WIN LIKE THAT?!
ドドドド
DO DO DO DO
THERE'S A COW, POCO-LOCO!
A COW, I'M TELLING YOU!
クル…
WHRL

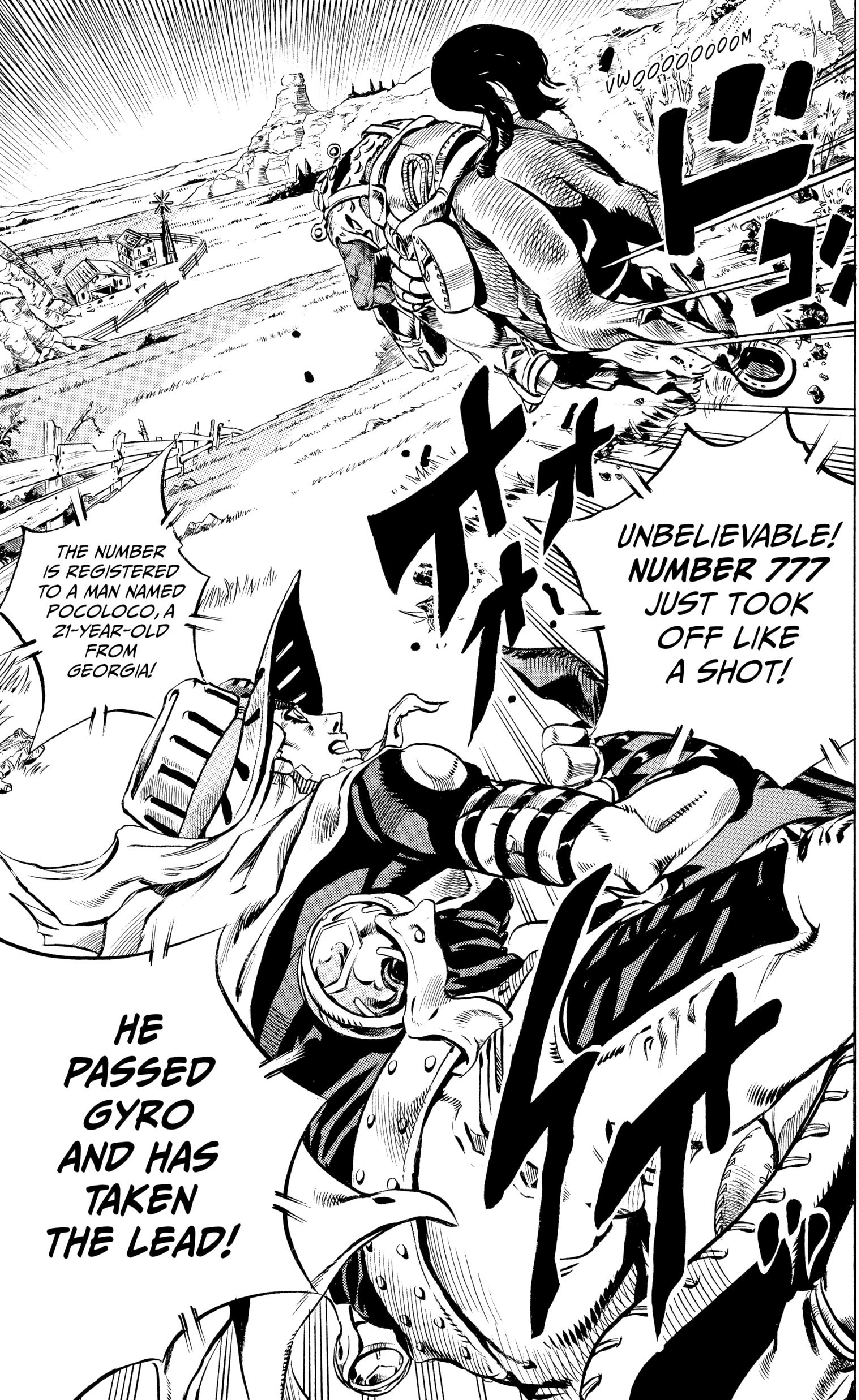

YOU CAN DO ANYTHING, RIGHT?
EHEH!
HEY! EYES UP FRONT!
YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO FALL OFF THE HORSE... NOT HERE, ANYWAY!


FWSH
GBOOOO
WHAT THE HELL?!
EYES MUST BE PLAYING TRICKS ON ME...
RUB RUB
DID I KNOCK MY HEAD WHEN I FELL IN THE WOODS OR SOMETHIN'?
WAS THAT SOME KINDA... HALLUCINATION, MAYBE?
YEAH...
YEAH, THAT'S IT. I'M YOUR ***HALLUCINATION.***
BUT YOU WANT TO DO IT, DON'T YA?
YOU'RE ONE IN FIVE BILLION, AFTER ALL.
GO FOR IT!
WHO GIVES A HOOT ABOUT A DOWNHILL SLOPE? JUST GO! HAVE FAITH!
YOU'RE THE LUCKY MAN! YOU THINK YOU CAN BEAT THAT GUY BY HOLDING YOUR HORSE BACK?
EVERYTHING'S WORKED OUT SO FAR, HASN'T IT? YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY GOING TO WIN!

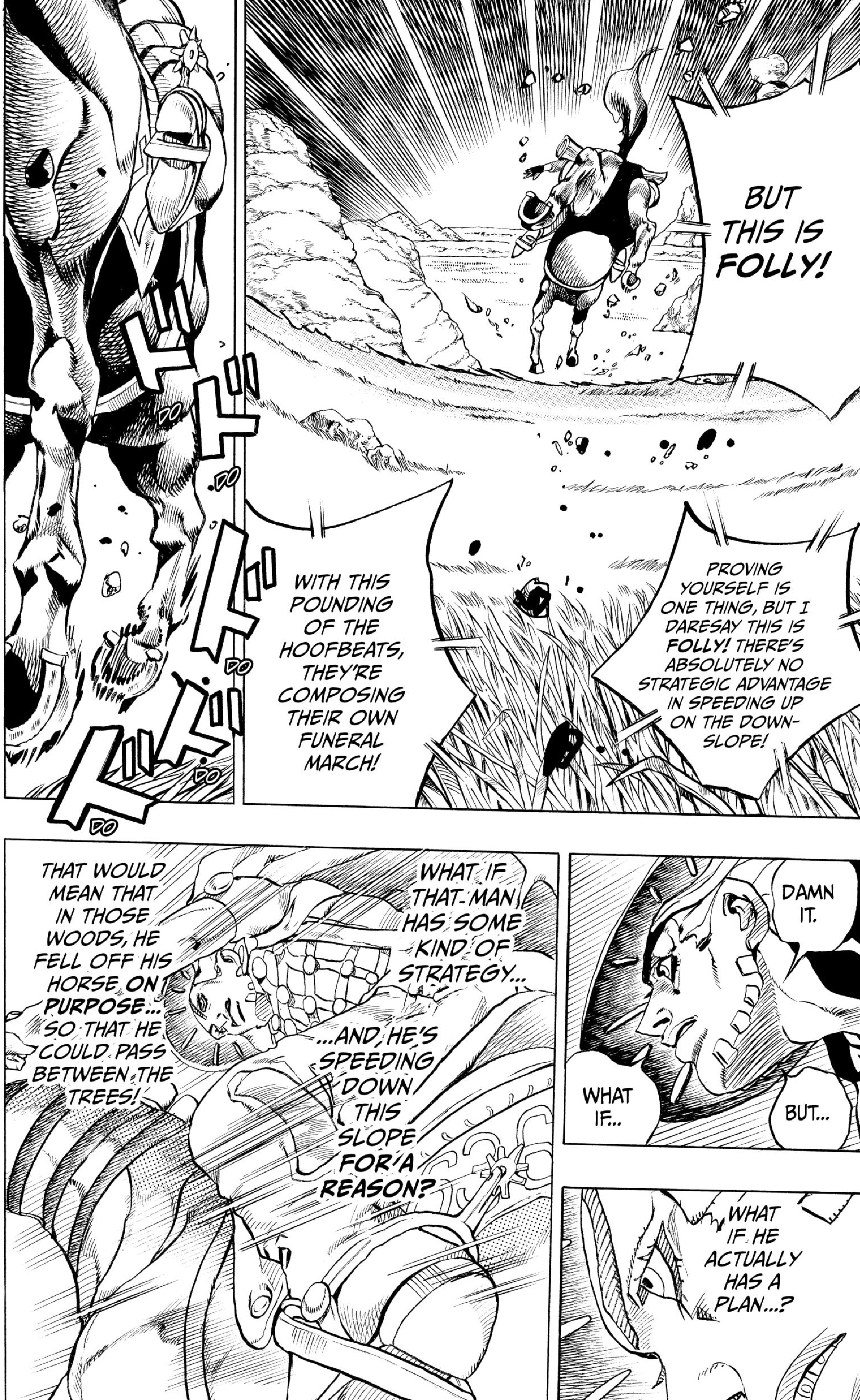

WSH
WHOA!
ZWMMM
...
DO
DO
DO
DO
DO
SHING

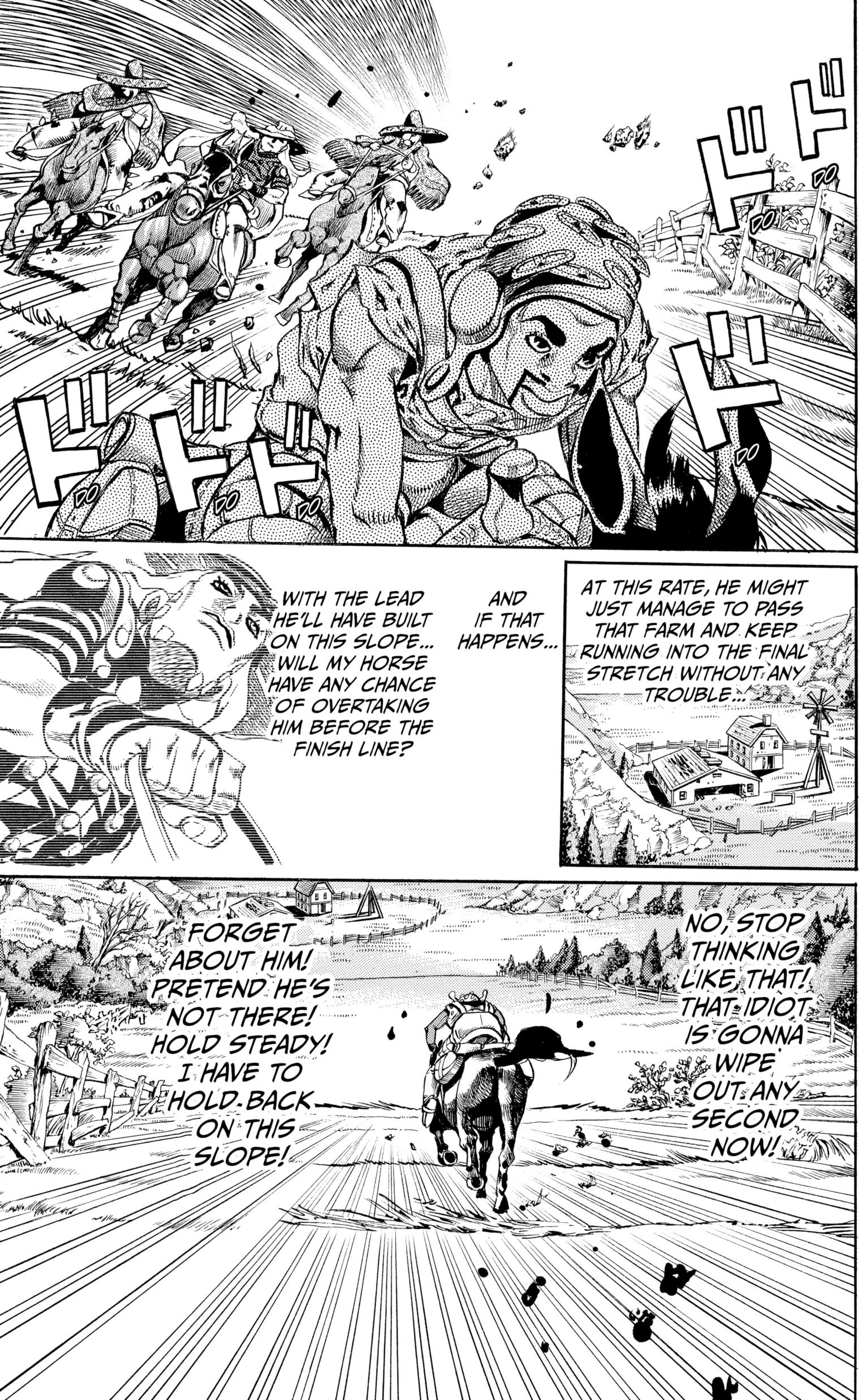

YO! HEY, YOU!
VWM
GUY IN THE FRONT!
IS THAT ALL YOU'VE GOT?
I'VE GOT SOMETHIN' TO SAY TO YOU!
...
ONCE I TAKE THE LEAD FROM YOU...
...YOU'LL NEVER GET IT BACK FROM ME— *POCOLOCO!*
...
DID YOU SAY SOME-THING?
WERE YOU TALKING TO MY ASS? 'CAUSE MY ASS DOESN'T HAVE EARS.
I'M TELLIN' YOU TO GET OUTTA MY WAY.
FALL ON BACK, *OLD MAN!*


WHAM
WHAT ?!

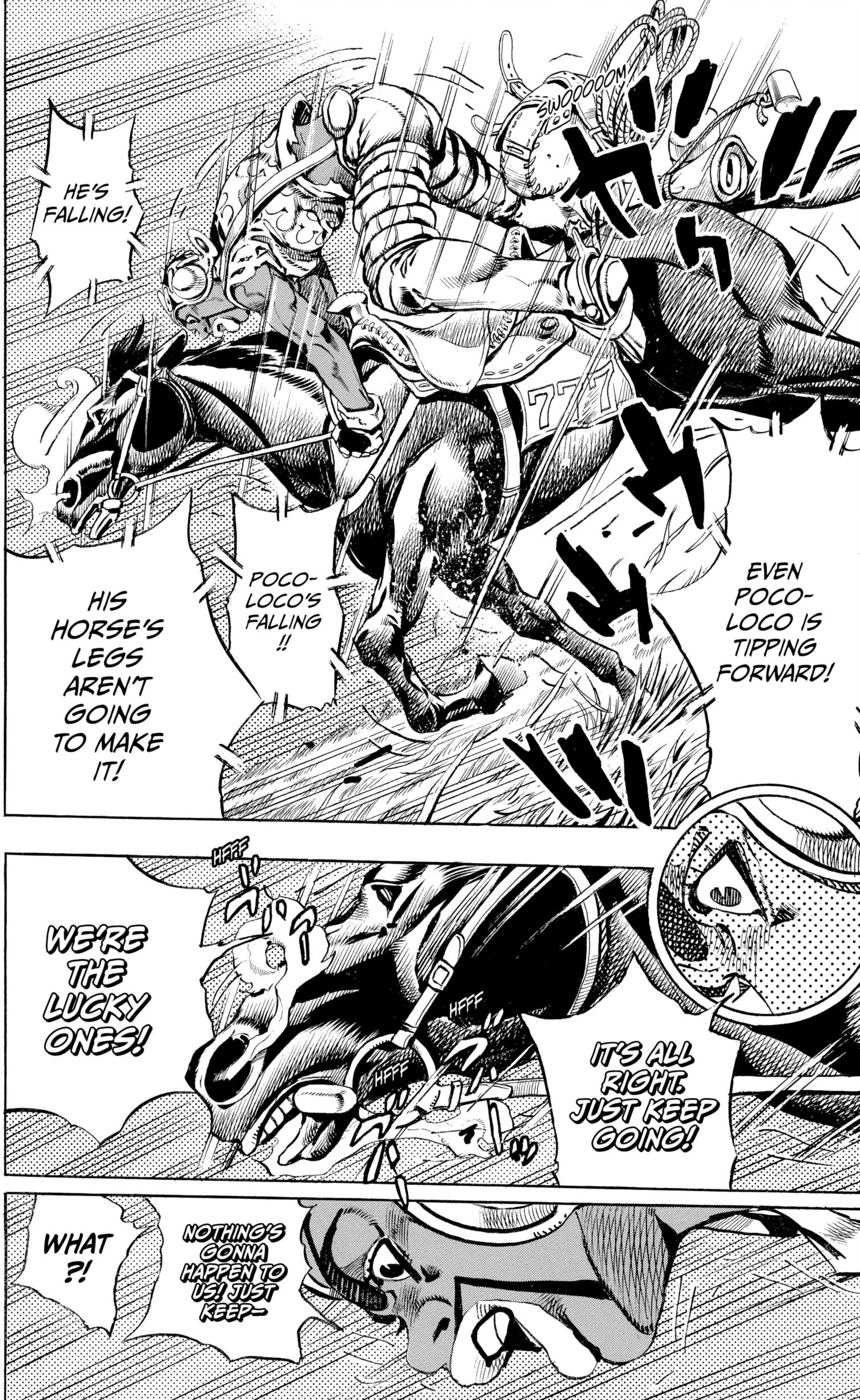

VWOOOOOOOOM
ドゴッ
オオオ
UNBELIEVABLE! NUMBER 777 JUST TOOK OFF LIKE A SHOT!
THE NUMBER IS REGISTERED TO A MAN NAMED POCOLOCO, A 21-YEAR-OLD FROM GEORGIA!
HE PASSED GYRO AND HAS TAKEN THE LEAD!

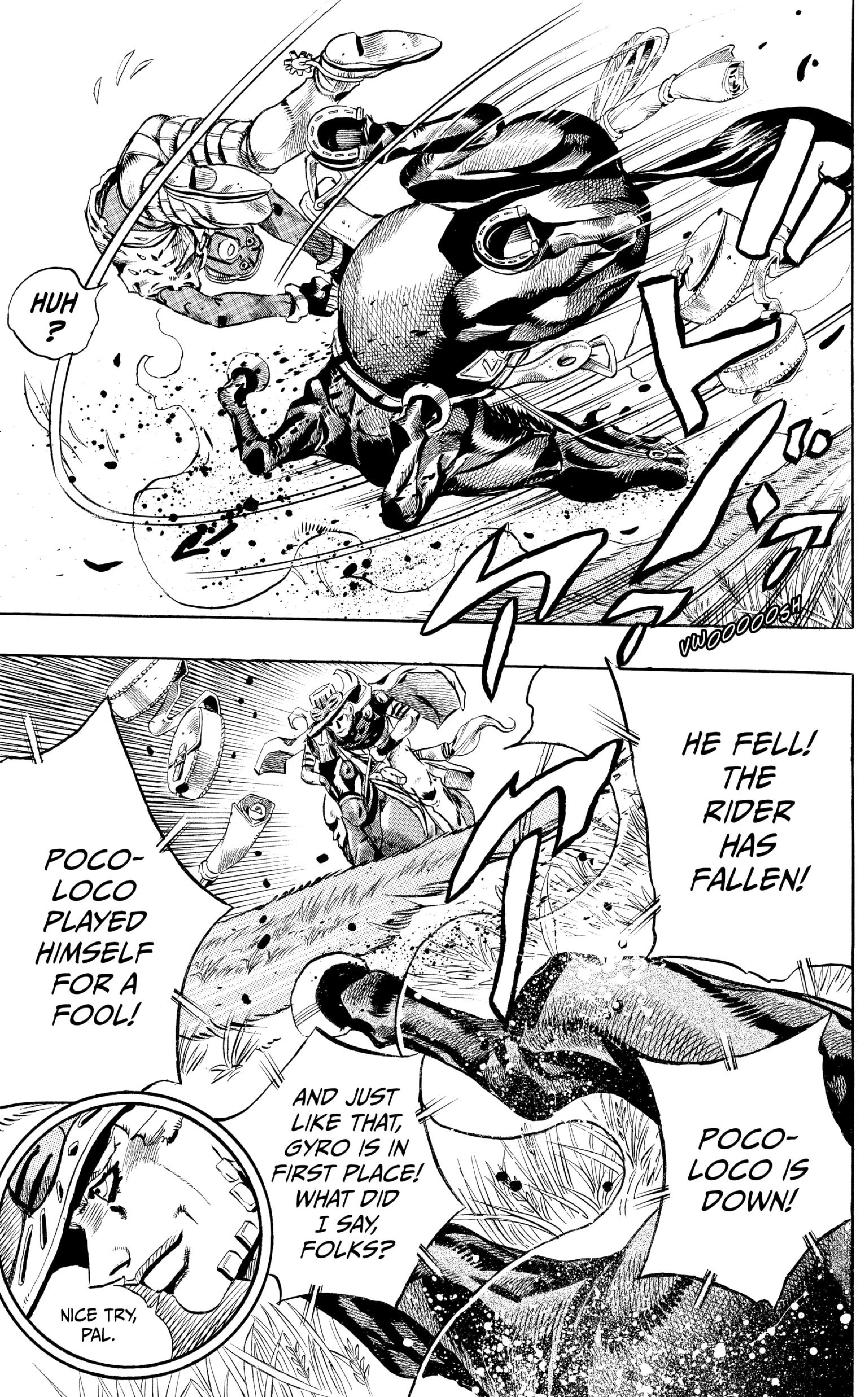
DOOM
BUT GYRO'S NOT TAKING THE BAIT!
HE'S HOLDING BACK!
VWM
STEADY!
FIGHT IT! DON'T LET THEM TEMPT YOU INTO SLIPPING UP NOW!
STEADY!
DO
DO
DO
ANYONE WHO GOES ALONG WITH THIS SHORTSIGHTED SPRINT IS GOING TO FIND THEMSELVES RUNNING HEADLONG DOWN THE STAIRWAY TO HELL!
EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM!
VWOOOSH
SOME OF THE RIDERS BEHIND ARE SPEEDING UP AND JOINING THE CHARGE!
THEY'RE FLYING NOW!
THEY'RE GAINING ON GYRO!
VWOOSH
THEY'RE 15 LENGTHS BEHIND! NOW TEN!
THEY'RE BEING GOADED BY POCO-LOCO!

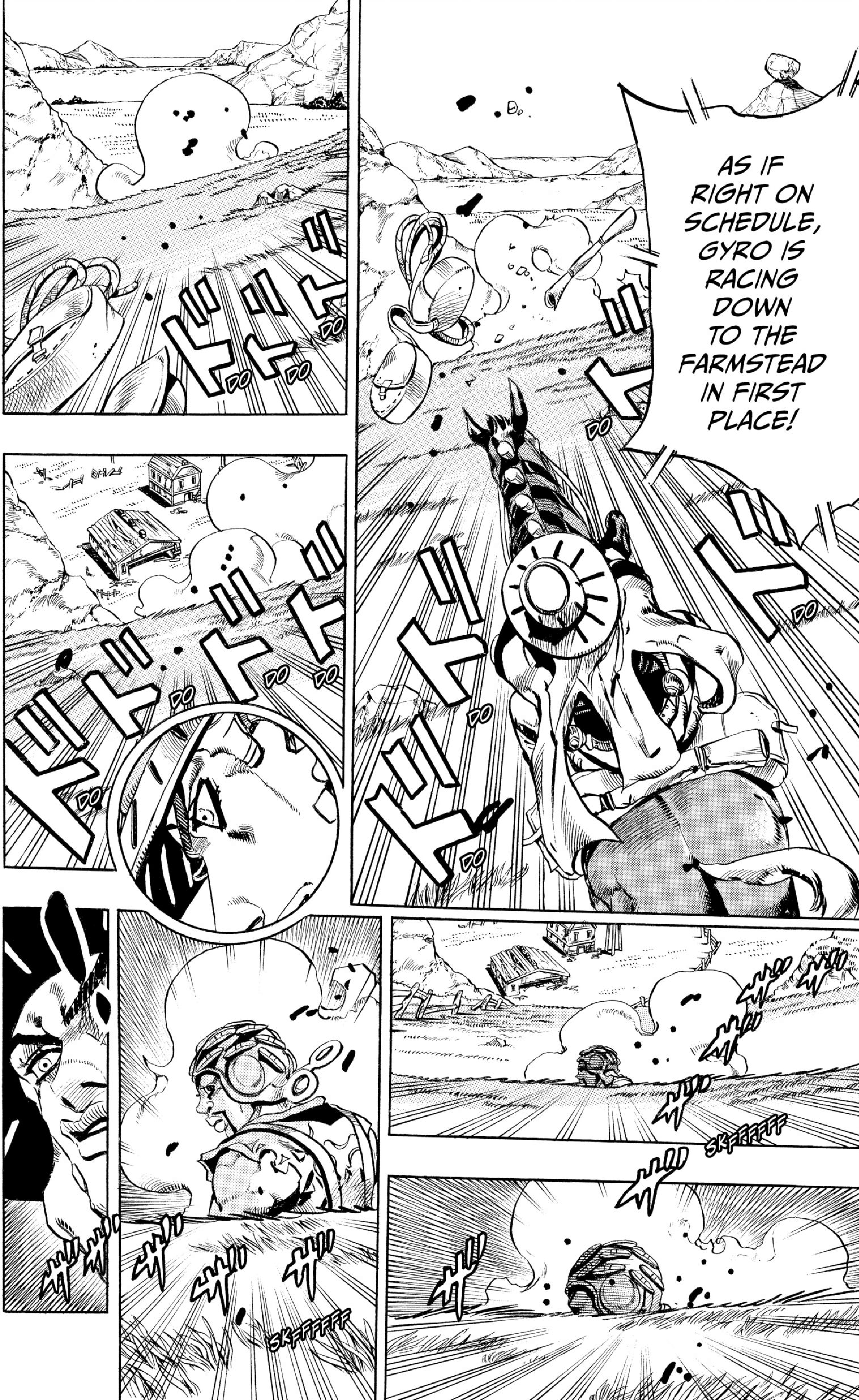

BUT THIS IS FOLLY!
PROVING YOURSELF IS ONE THING, BUT I DARESAY THIS IS FOLLY! THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NO STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE IN SPEEDING UP ON THE DOWN-SLOPE!
WITH THIS POUNDING OF THE HOOFBEATS, THEY'RE COMPOSING THEIR OWN FUNERAL MARCH!
ドドドドドド
DO DO DO DO DO
DAMN IT.
BUT...
WHAT IF...
WHAT IF HE ACTUALLY HAS A PLAN...?
WHAT IF THAT MAN HAS SOME KIND OF STRATEGY...
...AND HE'S SPEEDING DOWN THIS SLOPE FOR A REASON?
THAT WOULD MEAN THAT IN THOSE WOODS, HE FELL OFF HIS HORSE ON PURPOSE... SO THAT HE COULD PASS BETWEEN THE TREES!

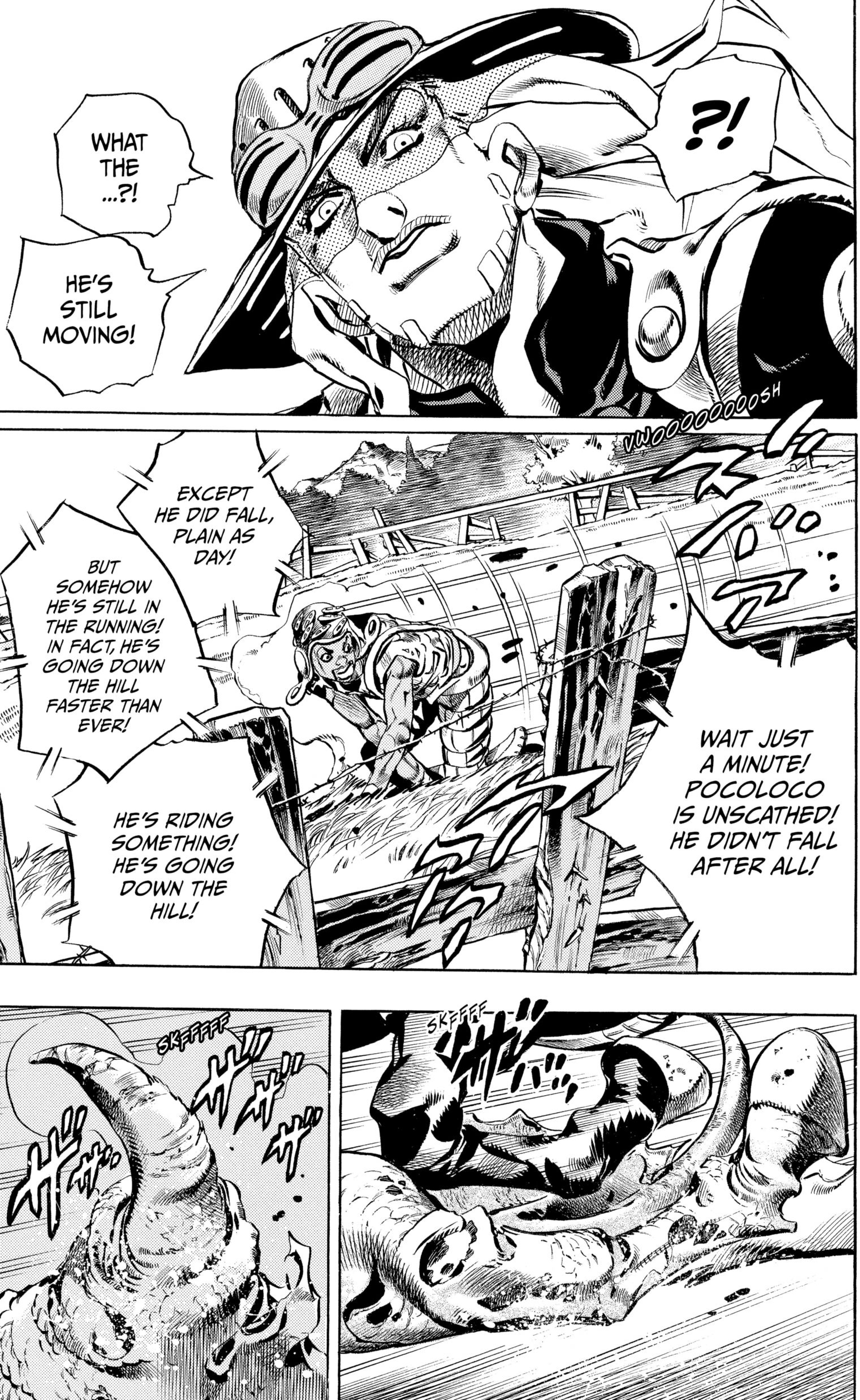

ドド
DO DO
ドド
DO
ドドドド
DO DO DO DO
AT THIS RATE, HE MIGHT JUST MANAGE TO PASS THAT FARM AND KEEP RUNNING INTO THE FINAL STRETCH WITHOUT ANY TROUBLE...
AND IF THAT HAPPENS...
WITH THE LEAD HE'LL HAVE BUILT ON THIS SLOPE... WILL MY HORSE HAVE ANY CHANCE OF OVERTAKING HIM BEFORE THE FINISH LINE?
NO, STOP THINKING LIKE THAT! THAT IDIOT IS GONNA WIPE OUT ANY SECOND NOW!
FORGET ABOUT HIM! PRETEND HE'S NOT THERE! HOLD STEADY! I HAVE TO HOLD BACK ON THIS SLOPE!

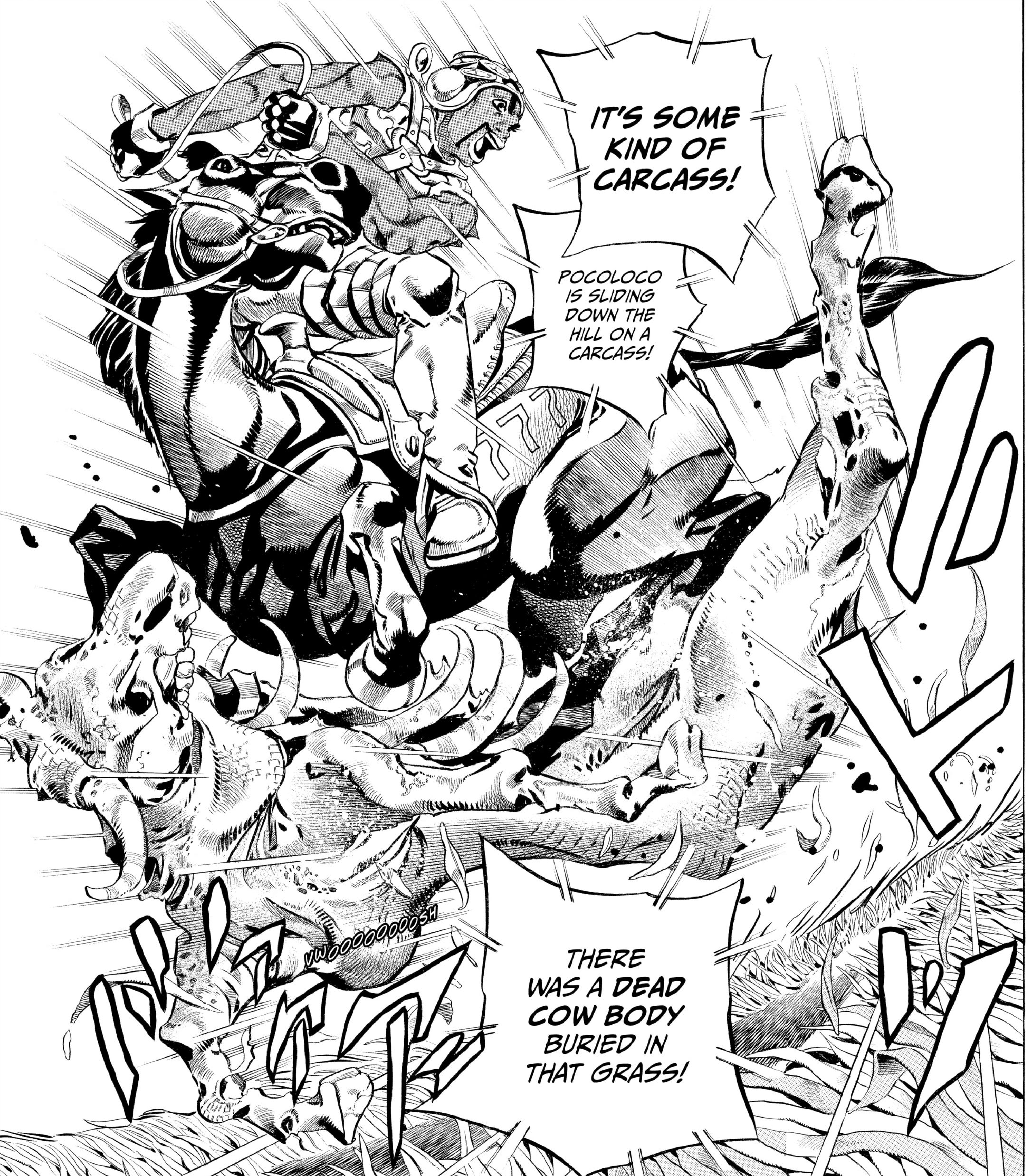
SKSSSSSSH
AAA AGH!
KRUNCH
URGH!
TWO HORSES HAVE JUST TOPPLED OVER! WHAT DID I TELL YOU? THE HORSES' LEGS CAN'T TAKE IT!
UNDER-ESTIMATING THIS SLOPE IS A ONE-WAY TICKET TO DISASTER!
THEY'RE TUMBLING DOWN THE HILL!
STUMBL
WOBBL
WOBBL
WOBBL

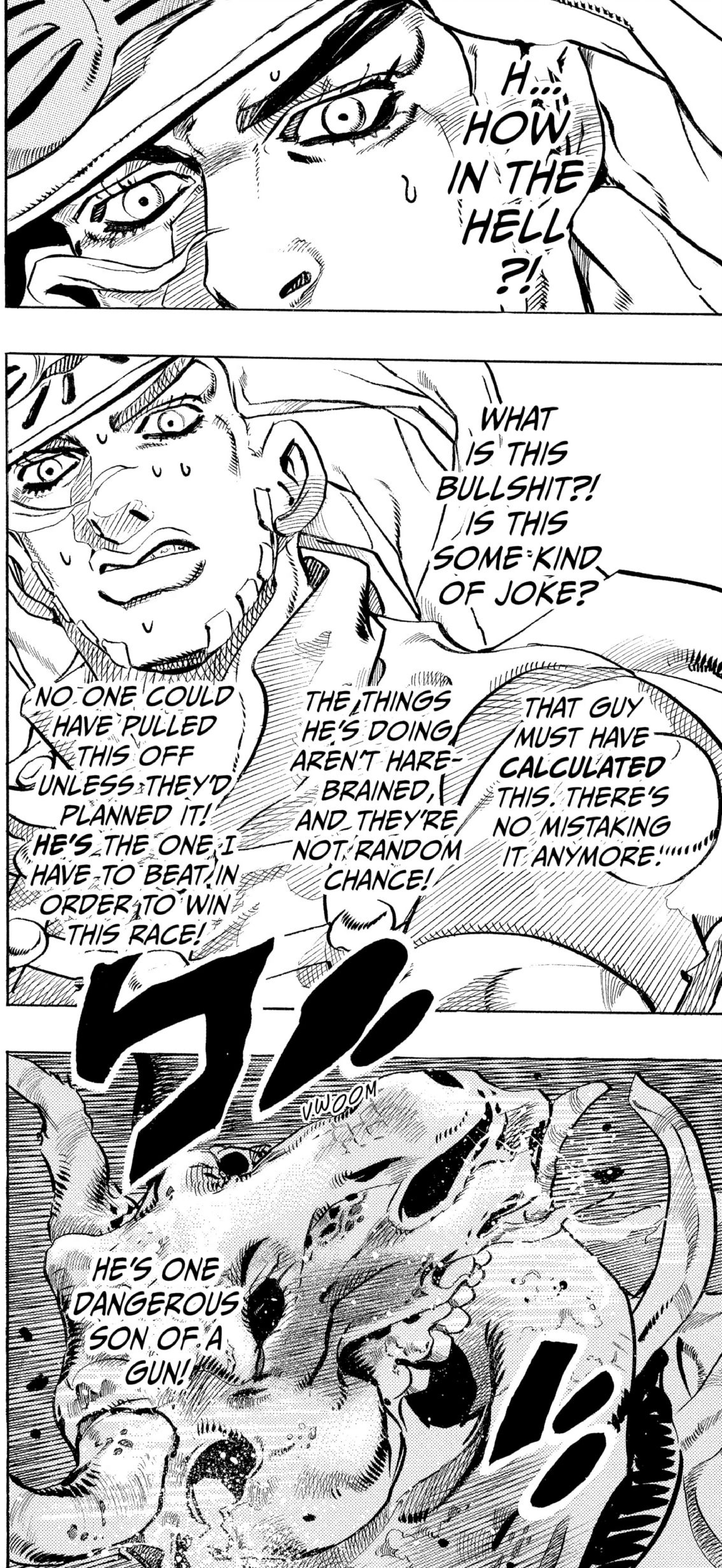

SWOOOOOM
EVEN POCO-LOCO IS TIPPING FORWARD!
777
POCO-LOCO'S FALLING !!
HE'S FALLING!
HIS HORSE'S LEGS AREN'T GOING TO MAKE IT!
IT'S ALL RIGHT. JUST KEEP GOING!
HFFF
HFFF
HFFF
WE'RE THE LUCKY ONES!
NOTHING'S GONNA HAPPEN TO US! JUST KEEP—
WHAT ?!

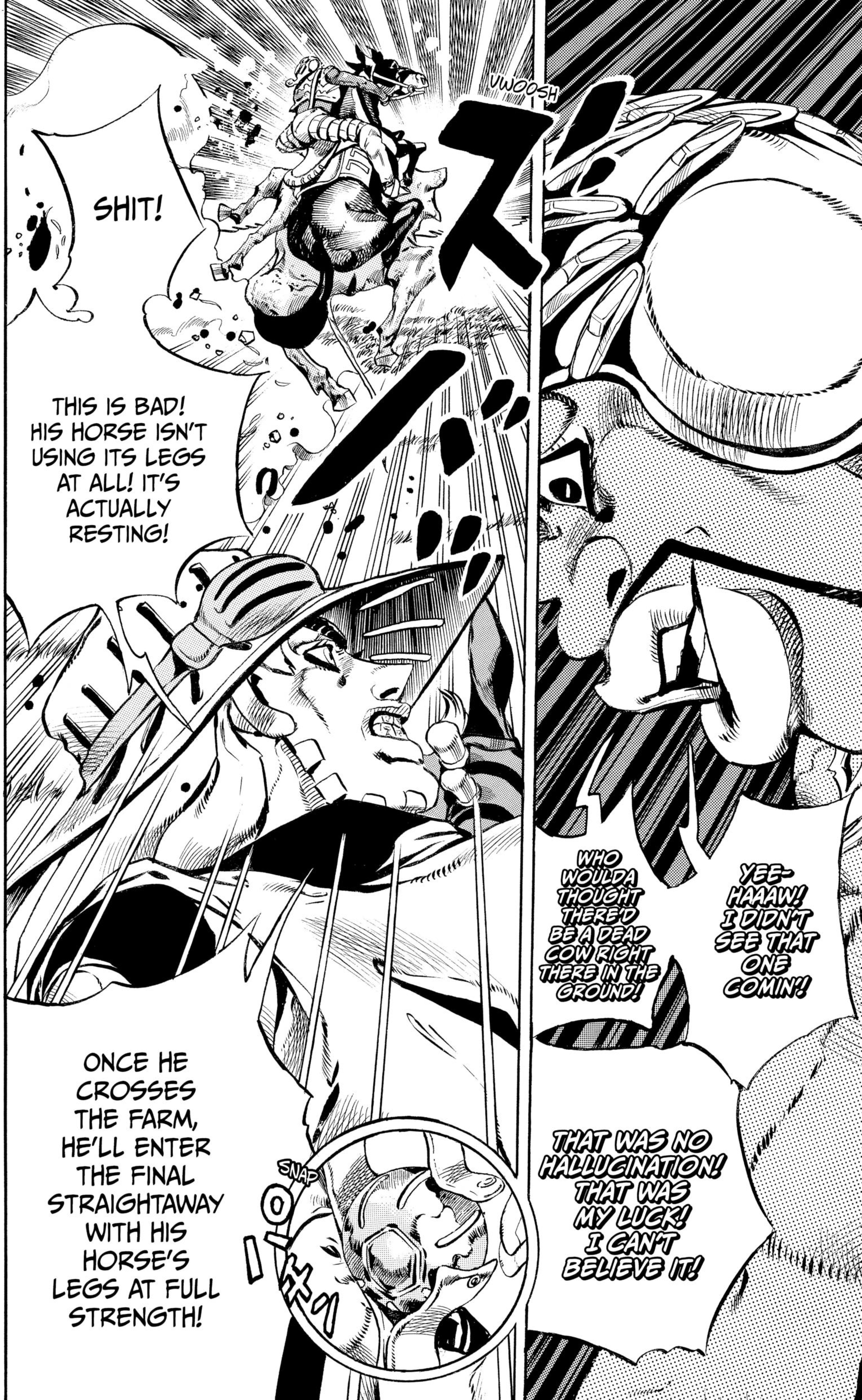

HUH?
VWOOOOOOSH
HE FELL! THE RIDER HAS FALLEN!
POCO-LOCO PLAYED HIMSELF FOR A FOOL!
POCO-LOCO IS DOWN!
AND JUST LIKE THAT, GYRO IS IN FIRST PLACE! WHAT DID I SAY, FOLKS?
NICE TRY, PAL.

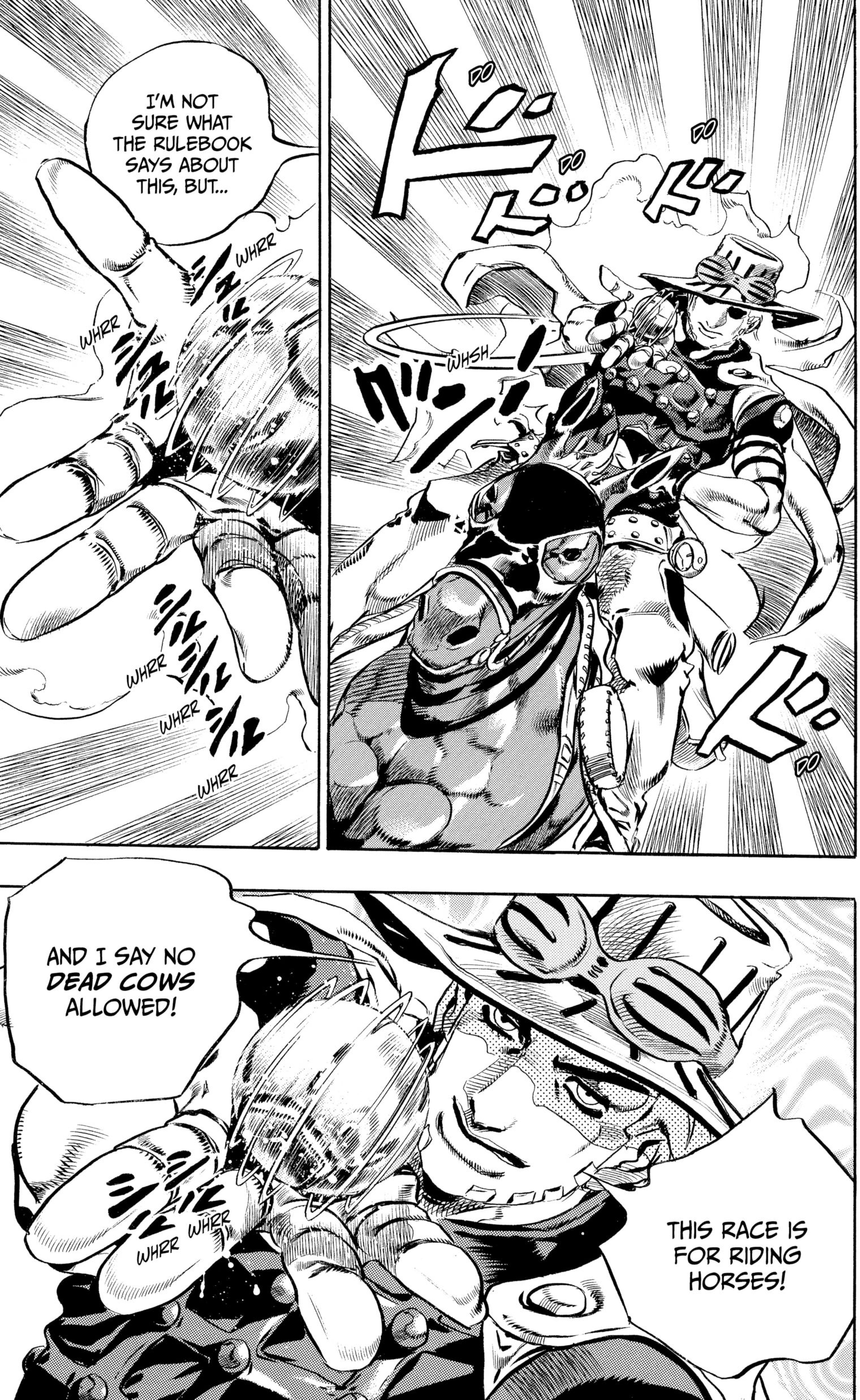

AS IF RIGHT ON SCHEDULE, GYRO IS RACING DOWN TO THE FARMSTEAD IN FIRST PLACE!
ドドドドド
DO DO DO DO
ドドドド
DO DO DO DO
ドドドドド
DO DO DO DO
ザザッ
SKFFFFFF
ザザッ
SKFFFFFF

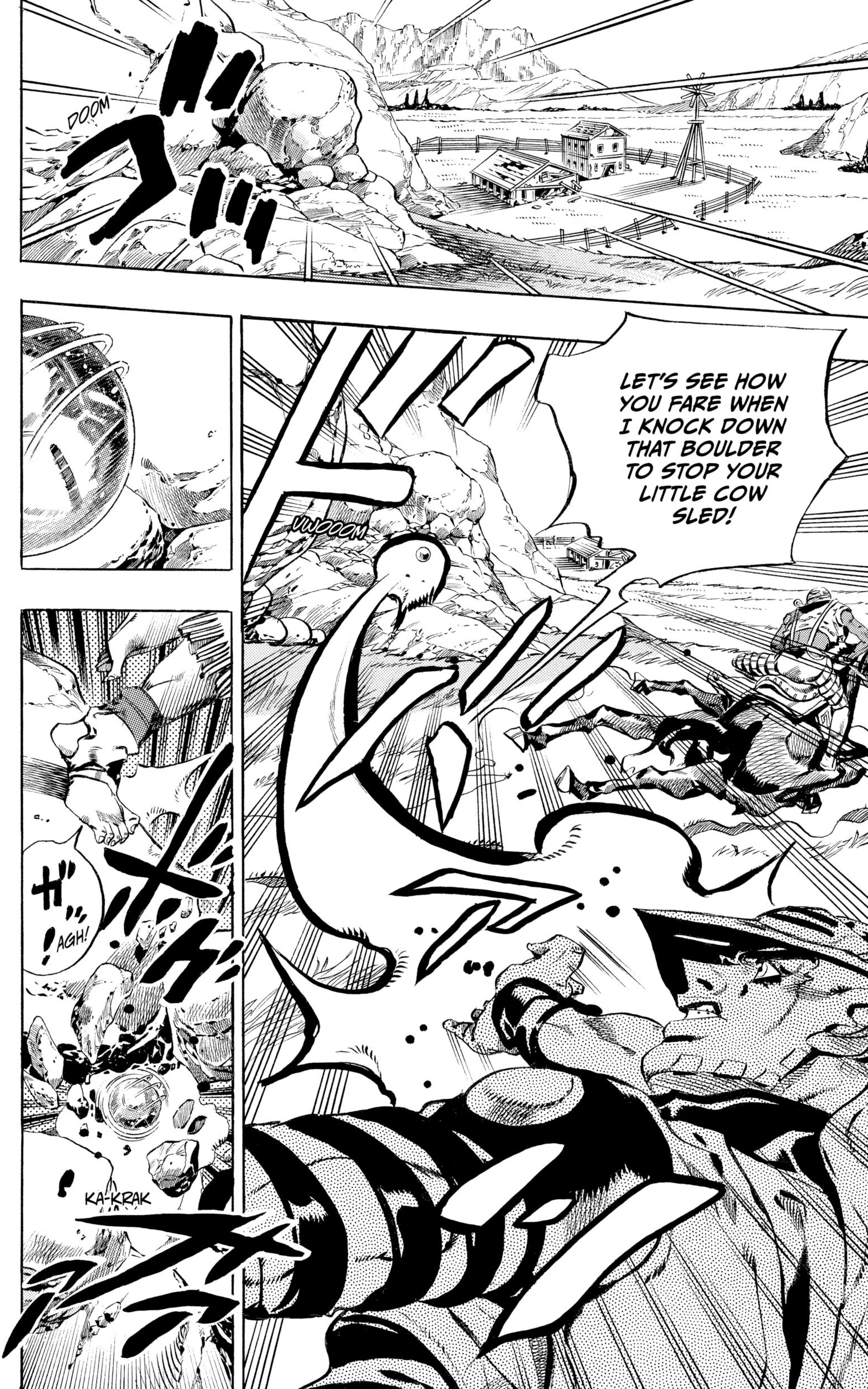

?!
WHAT THE ...?!
HE'S STILL MOVING!
VWOOOOOOOOOSH
WAIT JUST A MINUTE! POCOLOCO IS UNSCATHED! HE DIDN'T FALL AFTER ALL!
EXCEPT HE DID FALL, PLAIN AS DAY!
BUT SOMEHOW HE'S STILL IN THE RUNNING! IN FACT, HE'S GOING DOWN THE HILL FASTER THAN EVER!
HE'S RIDING SOMETHING! HE'S GOING DOWN THE HILL!
SKFFFFF
SKFFFFF

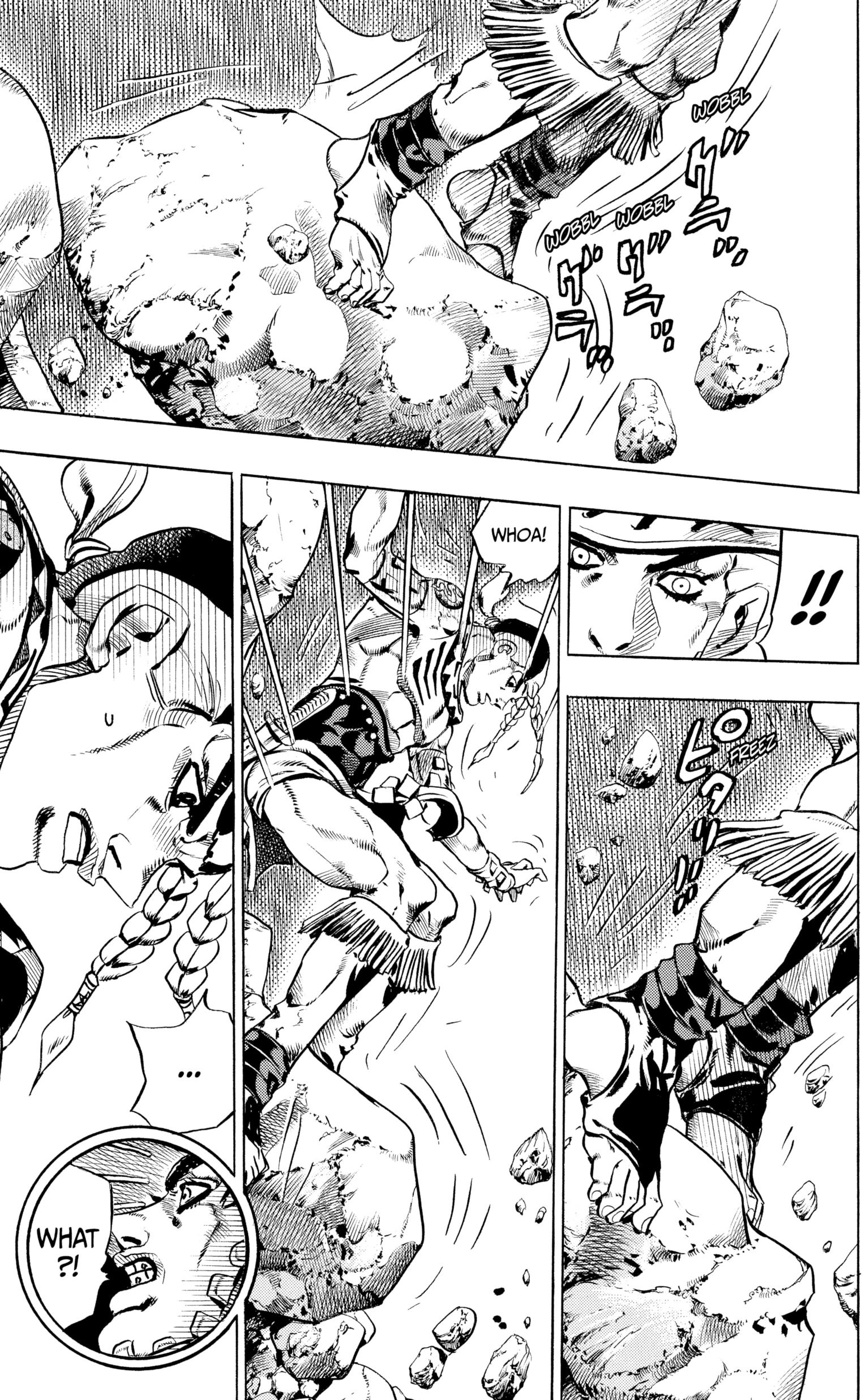

IT'S SOME KIND OF CARCASS!
POCOLOCO IS SLIDING DOWN THE HILL ON A CARCASS!
VWOOOOOOOOOSH
THERE WAS A DEAD COW BODY BURIED IN THAT GRASS!


H... HOW IN THE HELL ?!
WHAT IS THIS BULLSHIT?! IS THIS SOME KIND OF JOKE?
THAT GUY MUST HAVE CALCULATED THIS. THERE'S NO MISTAKING IT ANYMORE.
THE THINGS HE'S DOING AREN'T HARE-BRAINED, AND THEY'RE NOT RANDOM CHANCE!
NO ONE COULD HAVE PULLED THIS OFF UNLESS THEY'D PLANNED IT! HE'S THE ONE I HAVE TO BEAT IN ORDER TO WIN THIS RACE!
VWOOM
HE'S ONE DANGEROUS SON OF A GUN!


VWOOSH
YEE-HAAAW! I DIDN'T SEE THAT ONE COMIN'!
WHO WOULDA THOUGHT THERE'D BE A DEAD COW RIGHT THERE IN THE GROUND!
THAT WAS NO HALLUCINATION! THAT WAS MY LUCK! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
SHIT!
THIS IS BAD! HIS HORSE ISN'T USING ITS LEGS AT ALL! IT'S ACTUALLY RESTING!
ONCE HE CROSSES THE FARM, HE'LL ENTER THE FINAL STRAIGHTAWAY WITH HIS HORSE'S LEGS AT FULL STRENGTH!
SNAP


ドドドドドド
DO
DO
DO
DO
ヴンッ
WHSH
I'M NOT SURE WHAT THE RULEBOOK SAYS ABOUT THIS, BUT...
シュルシュル
WHRR
WHRR
WHRR
WHRR
WHRR
THIS RACE IS FOR RIDING HORSES!
AND I SAY NO *DEAD COWS* ALLOWED!
シュル
WHRR WHRR

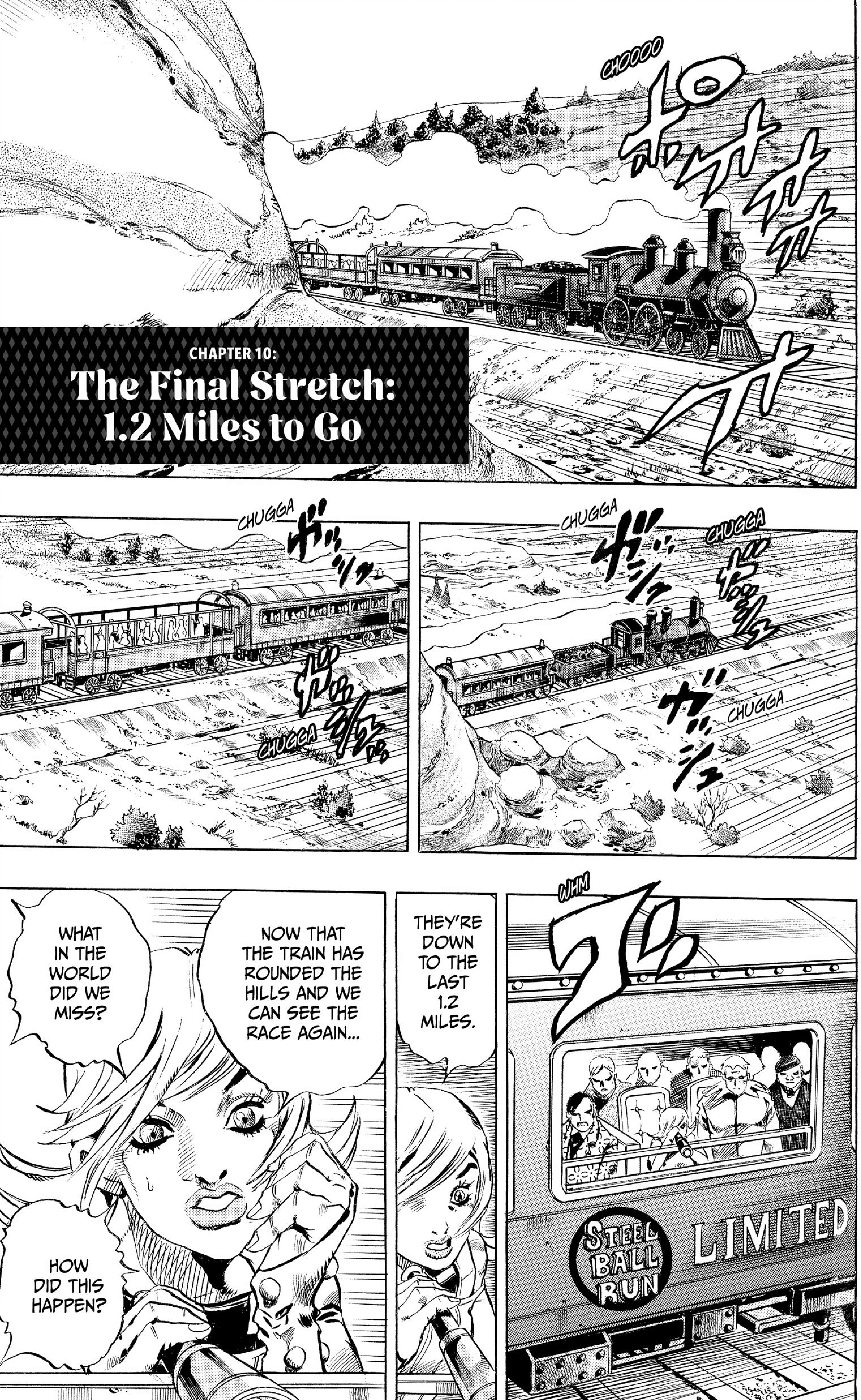

DOOM
LET'S SEE HOW YOU FARE WHEN I KNOCK DOWN THAT BOULDER TO STOP YOUR LITTLE COW SLED!
VWOOOM
ガッ！
AGH!
KA-KRAK


WOBBL
WOBBL
WOBBL
!!
WHOA!
U
...
FREEZ
WHAT ?!

HMPH!
DOOOOOM
TUMBL
TUMBL
WH... WHO IS THAT?!
AND WHAT'S HE DOING OUT HERE ?!
CRAP! THE BOULDER FELL TOO LATE!
HE'S BROKEN ONTO THE COURSE! AND HE'S FAST! REALLY FAST!
HOLD ON, WHO IS THIS?! HE'S RUNNING! HE'S RUNNING DOWN THE SLOPE ON HIS OWN TWO FEET!
HOW DID HE GET HERE? FOLKS, YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE!
VVJOOM
SAND MAN! WE'VE JUST RECEIVED CONFIRMATION OF THIS MAN'S NAME! HE'S REGISTERED IN THE RACE AS SAND MAN!
ANOTHER SHOCKING TURN OF EVENTS THAT NO ONE COULD HAVE FORESEEN! AS WE ENTER THE FINAL STRETCH, SAND MAN HAS THE LEAD!

CHAPTER 10:

The Final Stretch: 1.2 Miles to Go


CHOOOO
CHUGGA
CHUGGA
CHUGGA
CHUGGA
WHM
STEEL BALL RUN
LIMITED
THEY'RE DOWN TO THE LAST 1.2 MILES.
NOW THAT THE TRAIN HAS ROUNDED THE HILLS AND WE CAN SEE THE RACE AGAIN...
WHAT IN THE WORLD DID WE MISS?
HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

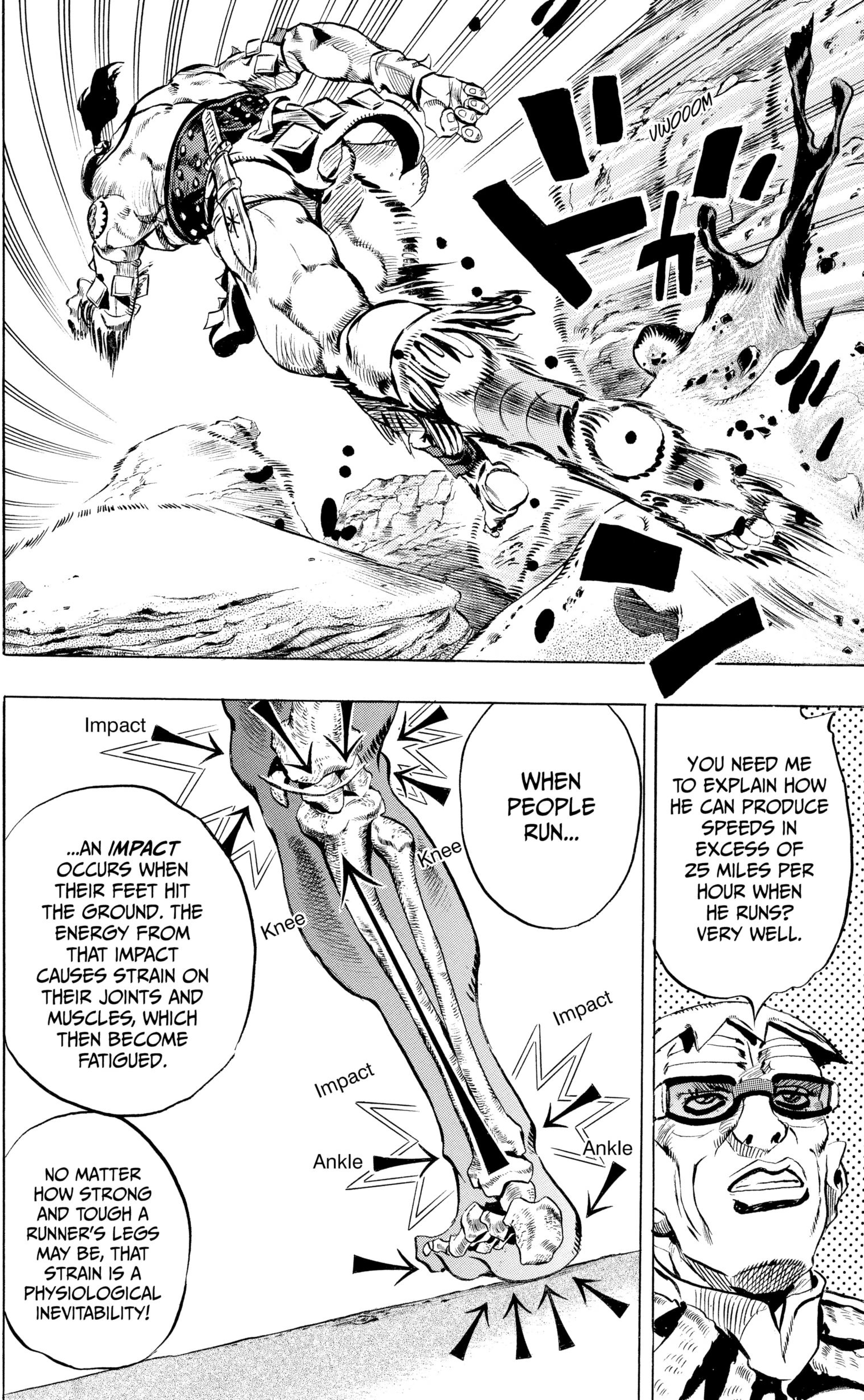
HE'S RUNNING ON FOOT!
HOW THE HECK DID HE EVEN GET THIS FAR?!
A MAN OUTRUNNING A HORSE? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!!
VWOOOOSH
2

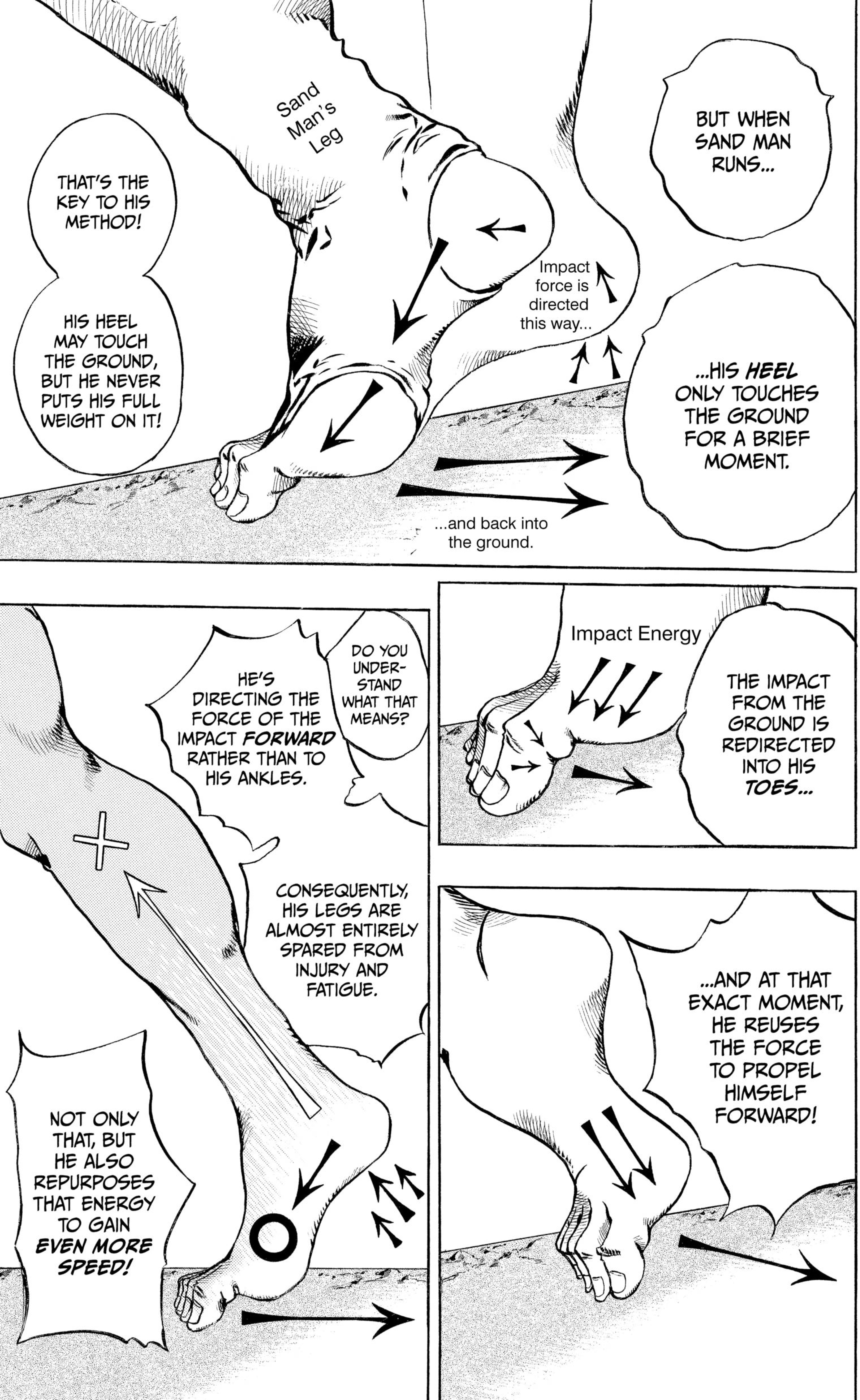
CHAPTER 10:

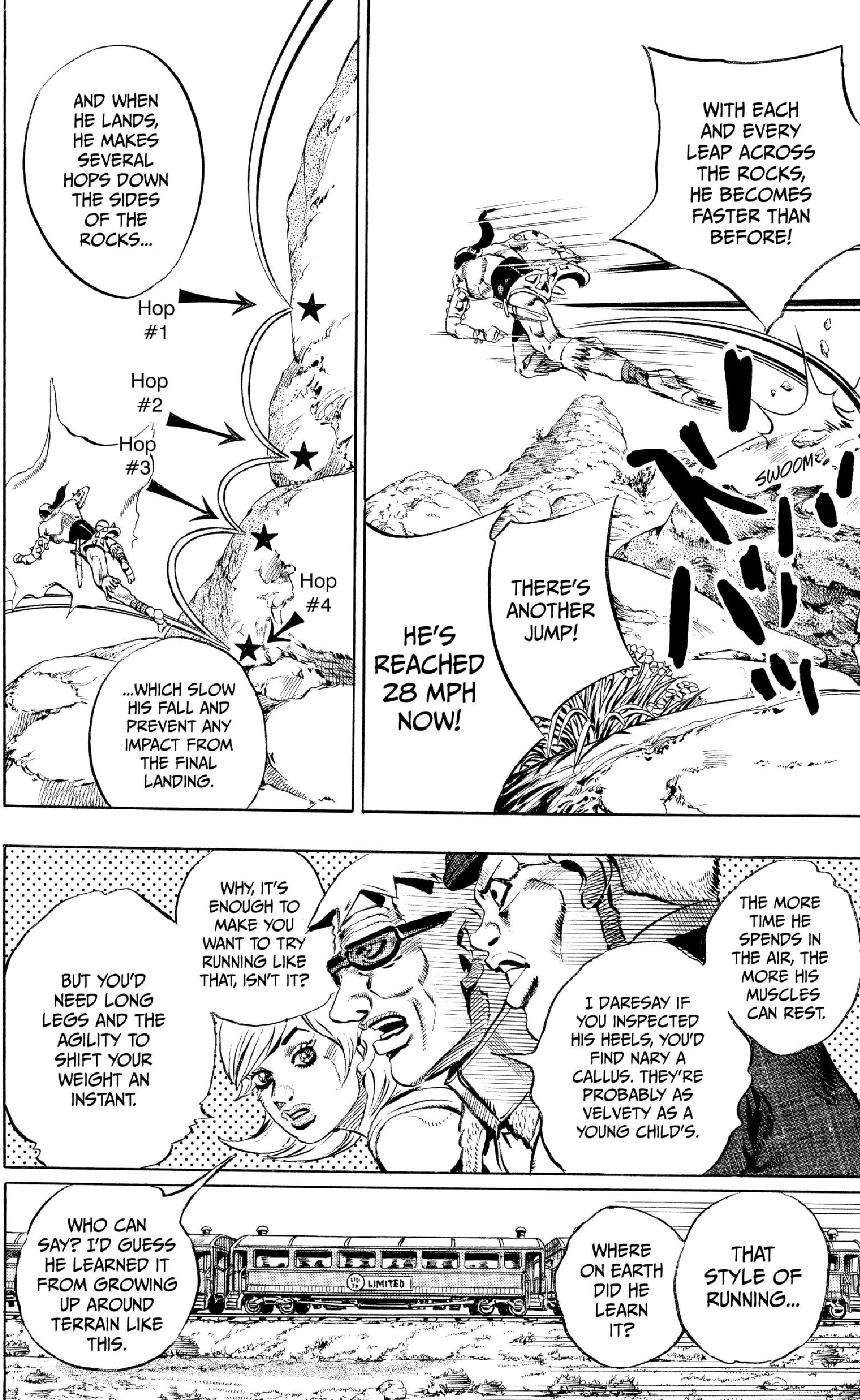
The Final Stretch: 1.2 Miles to Go

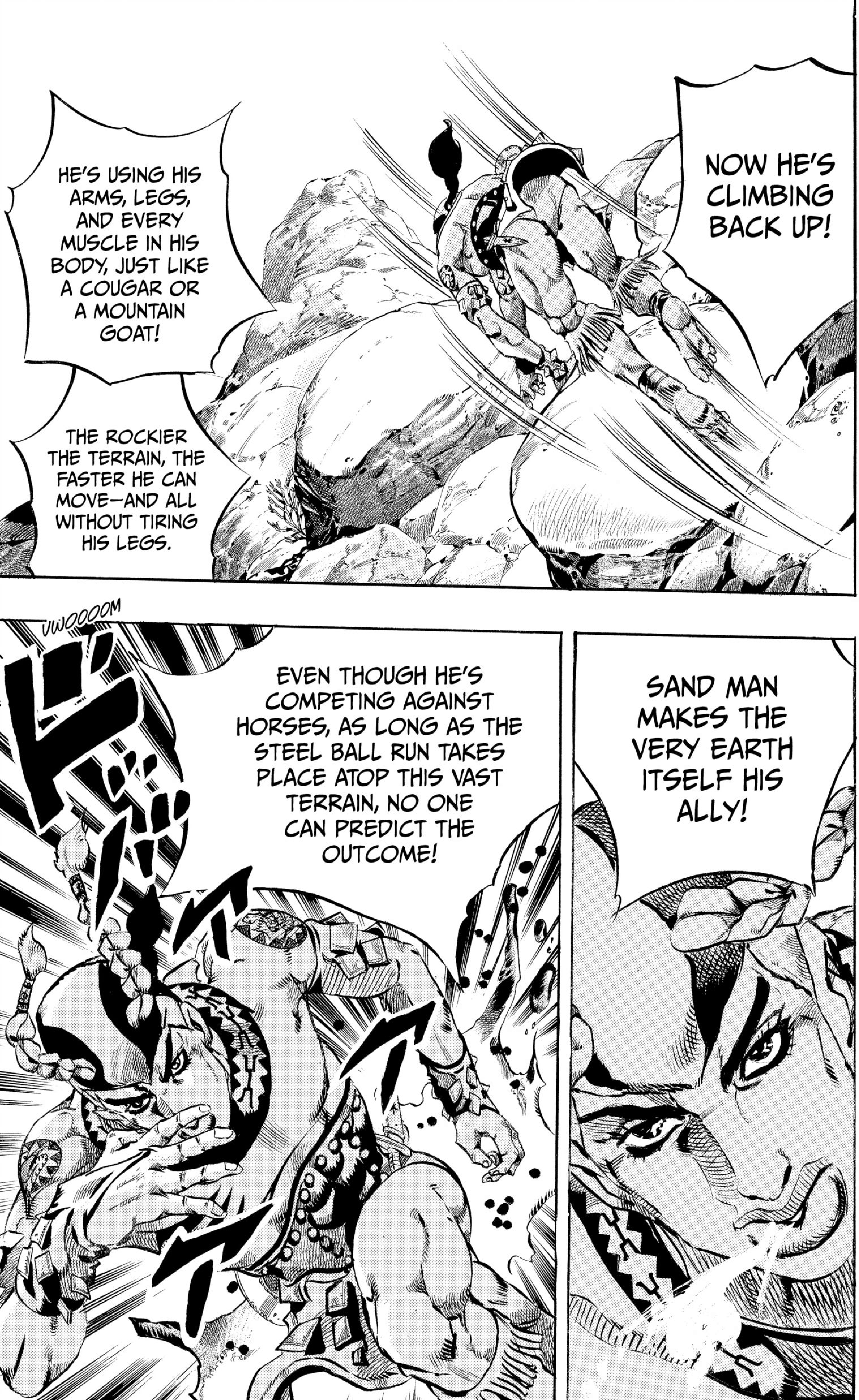
Straightaway
Finish Line
Rocky Hill
THE RIDERS ARE NEARING THE END OF THE DOWNHILL SLOPE, AND THE FINAL STRAIGHTAWAY IS IN THEIR SIGHTS! WE'RE NOW 17 MINUTES INTO THE RACE!
VWOOOSH
ドバーー
AND SAND MAN IS OFF!
LOOK AT SAND MAN GO!
HE'S IN THE LEAD! HE'S TAKING A SHORTCUT OVER THAT ROCKY HILL!
WHM
WHM

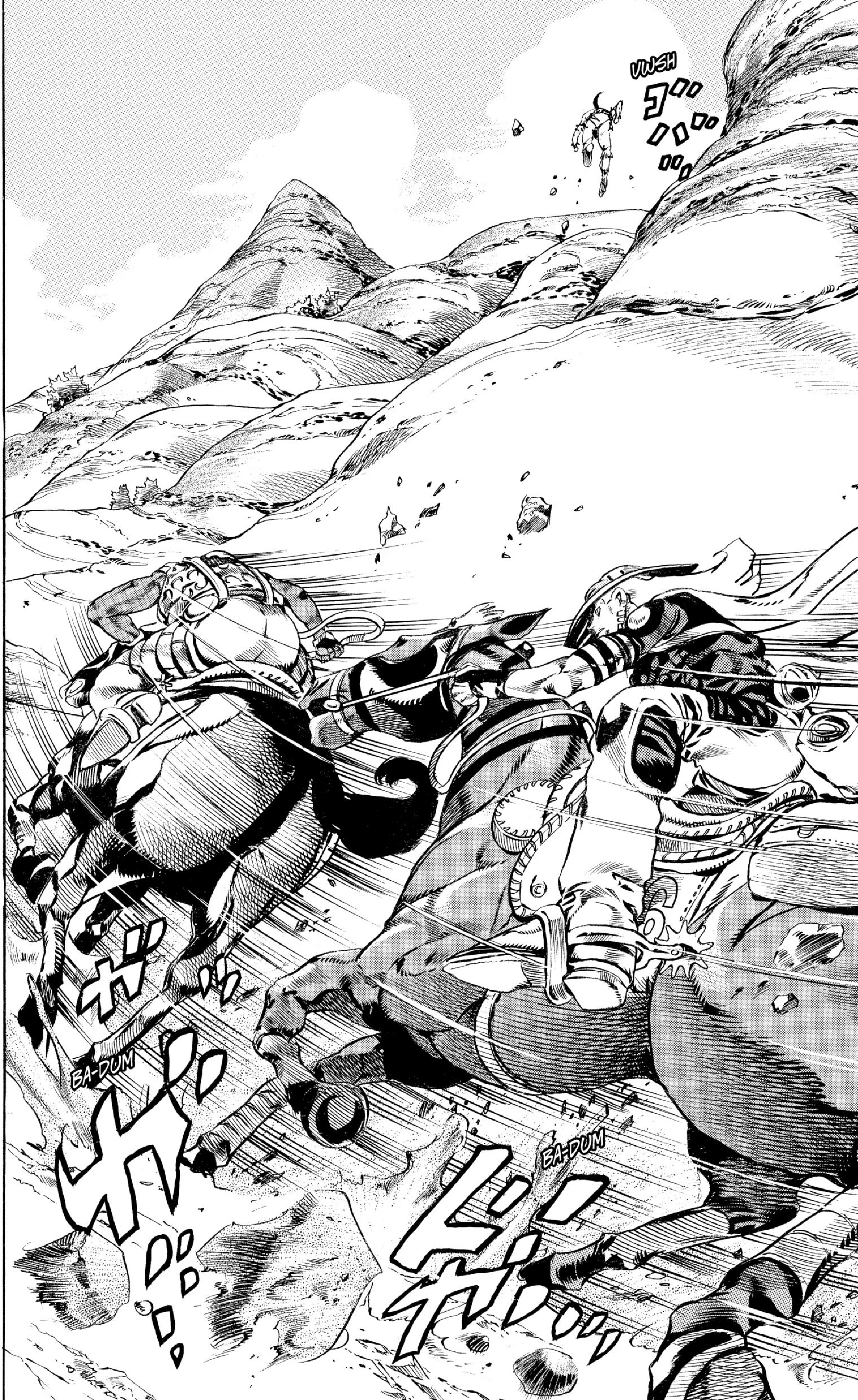
A MAN WHO CAN RUN FASTER THAN A HORSE...
INDEED, THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE.
IN THE CONTEXT OF A PERFECTLY FLAT RACETRACK, THAT IS.
BUT IF YOU WATCH CLOSELY, IT SHOULD START TO MAKE SENSE. HE'S GOING NEARLY 20 MILES PER HOUR.
TWENTY ...?
IN FACT, HE MIGHT BE BREAKING 25 AT TIMES.
TWENTY-FIVE MILES PER HOUR? SURELY NOT!
WAIT JUST A MINUTE, MR. STEEL. LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT.
ARE YOU REFERRING TO HOW FAST SAND MAN IS RUNNING?
ARE YOU AWARE OF WHAT YOU'RE SAYING? IF HE WERE RUNNING AT 22 MILES PER HOUR, HE'D FINISH THE 100-METER SPRINT IN JUST TEN SECONDS!
NO ONE HAS EVER BROKEN THAT TIME IN THE HISTORY OF TRACK AND FIELD!
AND TO FINISH A LONG-DISTANCE MARATHON IN A RECORD-BREAKING TWO HOURS WOULD ONLY BE 13 MILES PER HOUR!
77
VWOOOOOOM
THAT MAY BE, BUT THE PERFORMANCE WE'RE NOW WITNESSING IS UNDENIABLE.
AND THE SECRET LIES IN HIS RUNNING FORM.
HIS FORM EXPLAINS IT ALL! OBSERVE HOW HE LANDS ON THE ROCKS!
THMP
VWOOSH
WSH

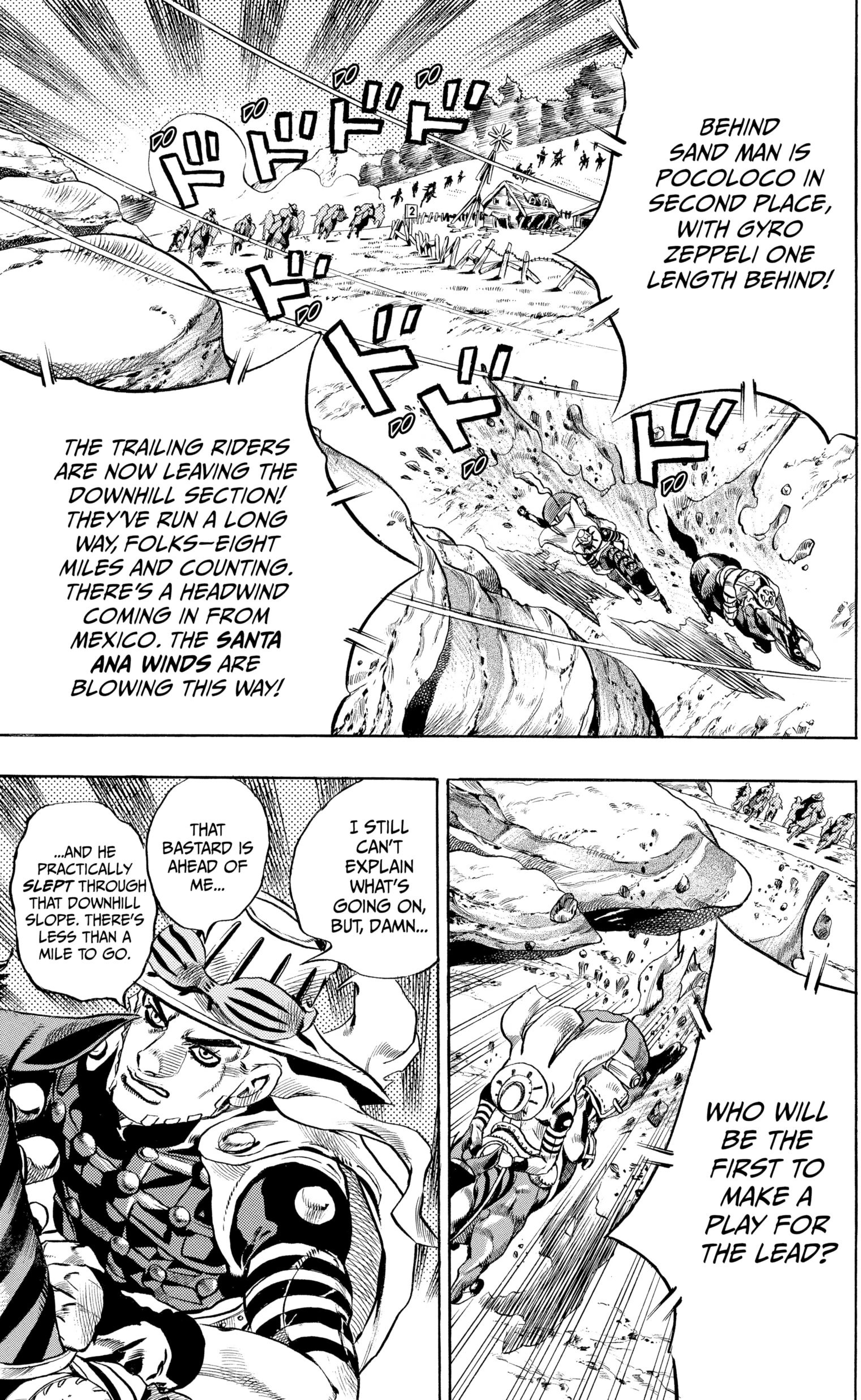

VWOOOM
ドガッ
YOU NEED ME TO EXPLAIN HOW HE CAN PRODUCE SPEEDS IN EXCESS OF 25 MILES PER HOUR WHEN HE RUNS? VERY WELL.
WHEN PEOPLE RUN...
...AN *IMPACT* OCCURS WHEN THEIR FEET HIT THE GROUND. THE ENERGY FROM THAT IMPACT CAUSES STRAIN ON THEIR JOINTS AND MUSCLES, WHICH THEN BECOME FATIGUED.
Impact
Knee
Knee
Impact
Impact
Ankle
Ankle
NO MATTER HOW STRONG AND TOUGH A RUNNER'S LEGS MAY BE, THAT STRAIN IS A PHYSIOLOGICAL INEVITABILITY!

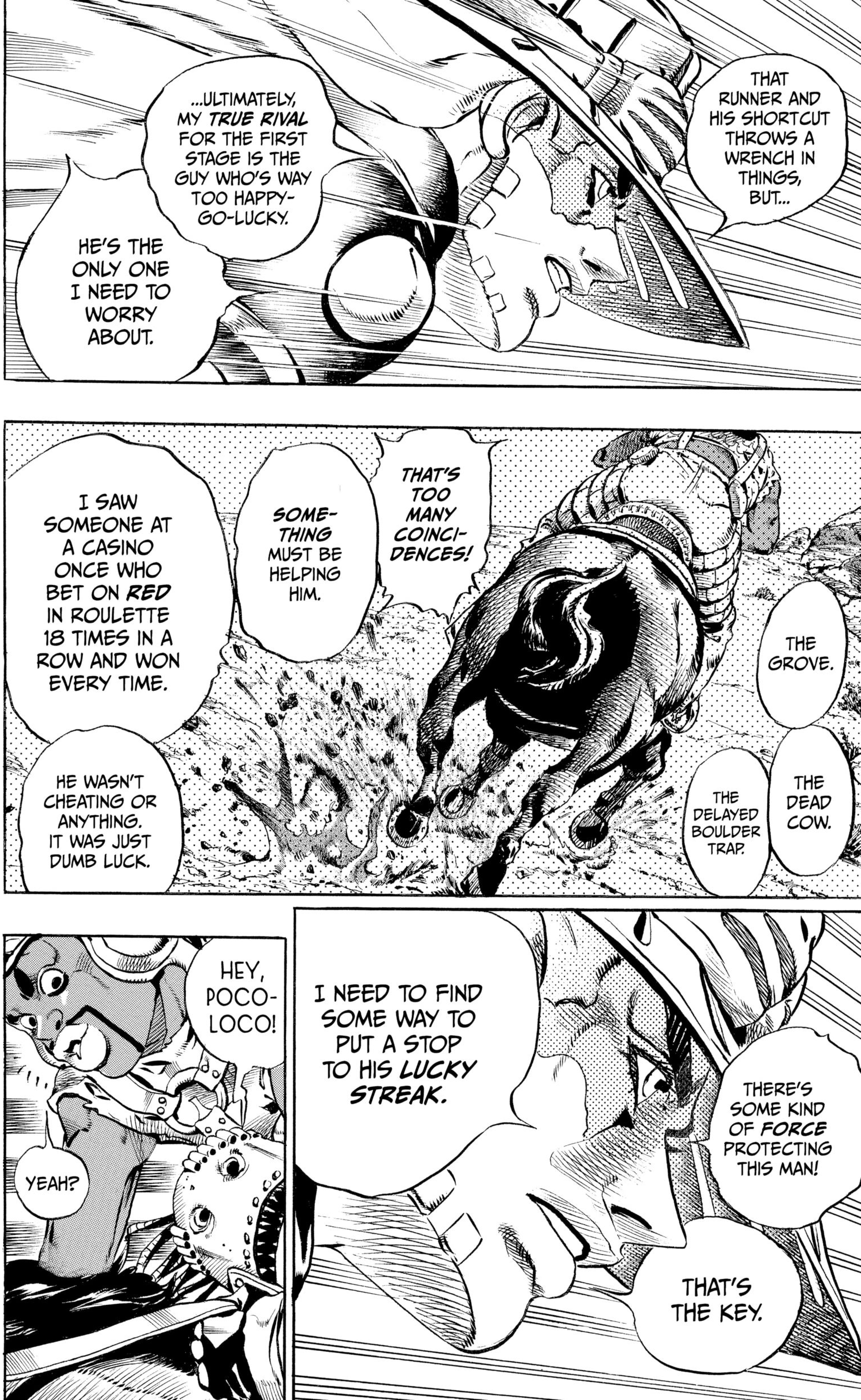

BUT WHEN SAND MAN RUNS...
...HIS *HEEL* ONLY TOUCHES THE GROUND FOR A BRIEF MOMENT.
Sand Man's Leg
Impact force is directed this way...
...and back into the ground.
THAT'S THE KEY TO HIS METHOD!
HIS HEEL MAY TOUCH THE GROUND, BUT HE NEVER PUTS HIS FULL WEIGHT ON IT!
Impact Energy
THE IMPACT FROM THE GROUND IS REDIRECTED INTO HIS *TOES...*
...AND AT THAT EXACT MOMENT, HE REUSES THE FORCE TO PROPEL HIMSELF FORWARD!
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT MEANS?
HE'S DIRECTING THE FORCE OF THE IMPACT *FORWARD* RATHER THAN TO HIS ANKLES.
CONSEQUENTLY, HIS LEGS ARE ALMOST ENTIRELY SPARED FROM INJURY AND FATIGUE.
NOT ONLY THAT, BUT HE ALSO REPURPOSES THAT ENERGY TO GAIN *EVEN MORE SPEED!*

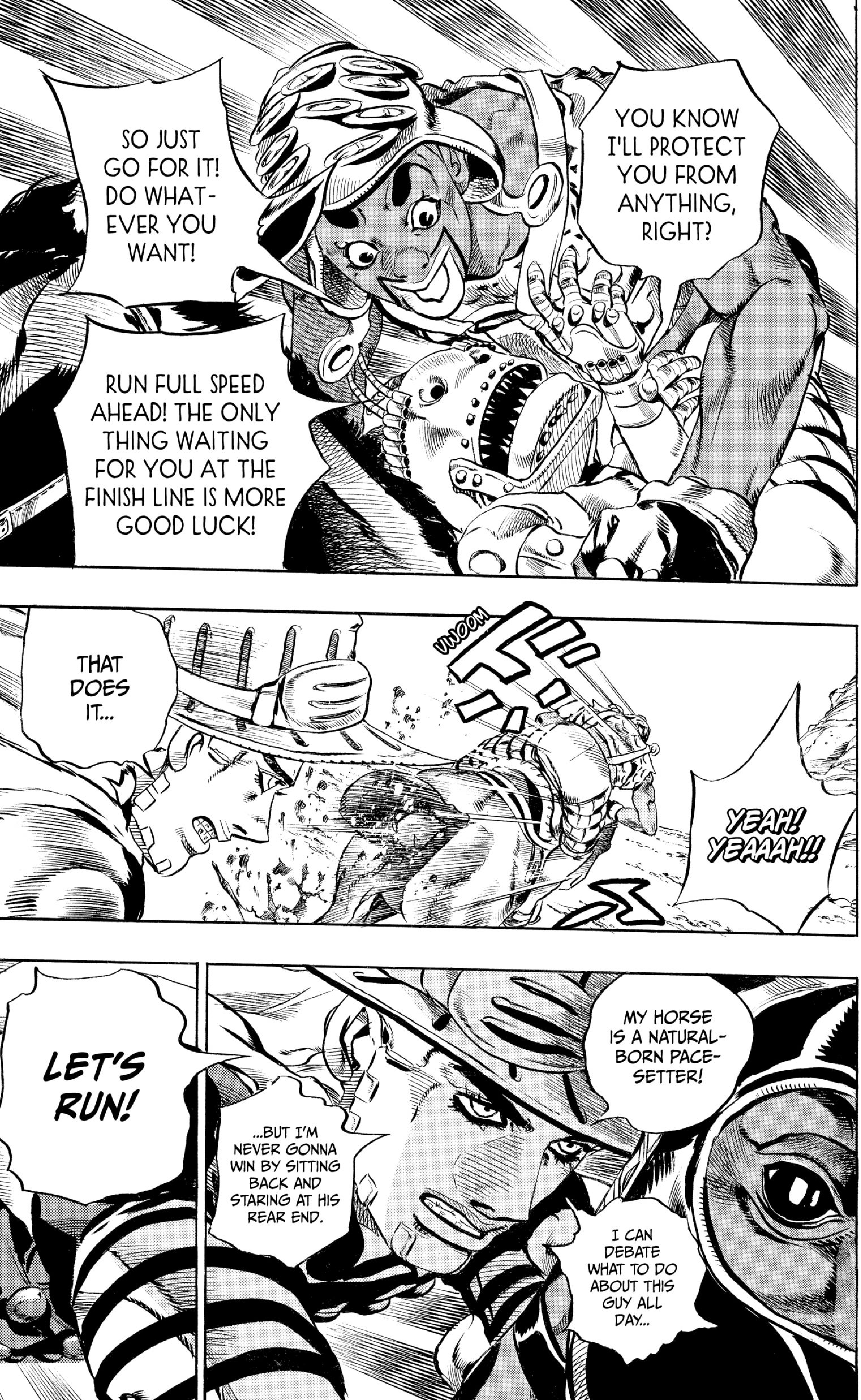

WITH EACH AND EVERY LEAP ACROSS THE ROCKS, HE BECOMES FASTER THAN BEFORE!
SWOOM
THERE'S ANOTHER JUMP!
HE'S REACHED 28 MPH NOW!
AND WHEN HE LANDS, HE MAKES SEVERAL HOPS DOWN THE SIDES OF THE ROCKS...
Hop #1
Hop #2
Hop #3
Hop #4
...WHICH SLOW HIS FALL AND PREVENT ANY IMPACT FROM THE FINAL LANDING.
THE MORE TIME HE SPENDS IN THE AIR, THE MORE HIS MUSCLES CAN REST.
I DARESAY IF YOU INSPECTED HIS HEELS, YOU'D FIND NARY A CALLUS. THEY'RE PROBABLY AS VELVETY AS A YOUNG CHILD'S.
WHY, IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU WANT TO TRY RUNNING LIKE THAT, ISN'T IT?
BUT YOU'D NEED LONG LEGS AND THE AGILITY TO SHIFT YOUR WEIGHT AN INSTANT.
THAT STYLE OF RUNNING...
WHERE ON EARTH DID HE LEARN IT?
WHO CAN SAY? I'D GUESS HE LEARNED IT FROM GROWING UP AROUND TERRAIN LIKE THIS.
LIMITED


NOW HE'S CLIMBING BACK UP!
HE'S USING HIS ARMS, LEGS, AND EVERY MUSCLE IN HIS BODY, JUST LIKE A COUGAR OR A MOUNTAIN GOAT!
THE ROCKIER THE TERRAIN, THE FASTER HE CAN MOVE—AND ALL WITHOUT TIRING HIS LEGS.
SAND MAN MAKES THE VERY EARTH ITSELF HIS ALLY!
VWOOOOM
ド
EVEN THOUGH HE'S COMPETING AGAINST HORSES, AS LONG AS THE STEEL BALL RUN TAKES PLACE ATOP THIS VAST TERRAIN, NO ONE CAN PREDICT THE OUTCOME!


VWSH
BA-DUM
BA-DUM

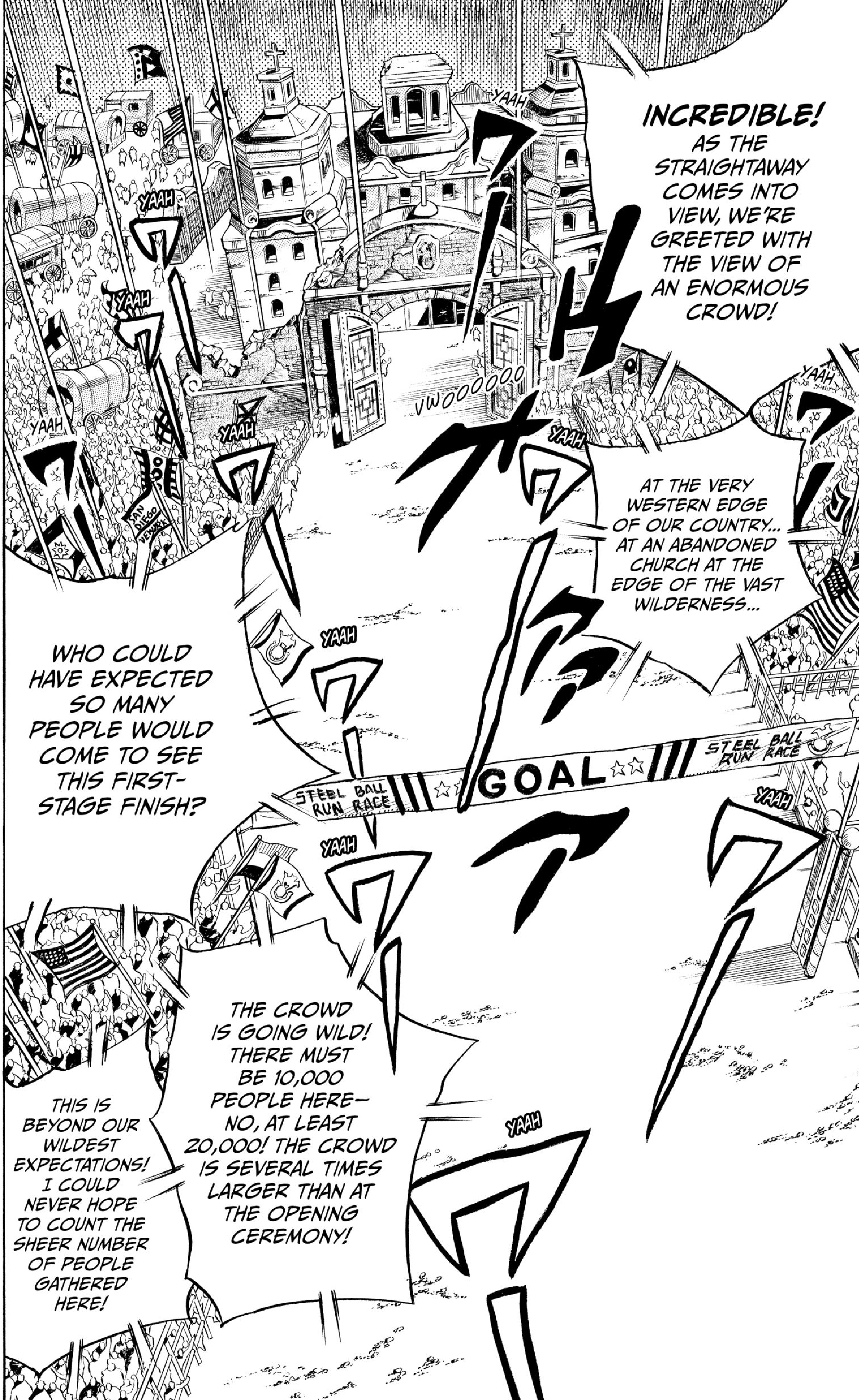

ドドドドドドドド
DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO
BEHIND SAND MAN IS POCOLOCO IN SECOND PLACE, WITH GYRO ZEPPELI ONE LENGTH BEHIND!
THE TRAILING RIDERS ARE NOW LEAVING THE DOWNHILL SECTION! THEY'VE RUN A LONG WAY, FOLKS—EIGHT MILES AND COUNTING. THERE'S A HEADWIND COMING IN FROM MEXICO. THE SANTA ANA WINDS ARE BLOWING THIS WAY!
WHO WILL BE THE FIRST TO MAKE A PLAY FOR THE LEAD?
I STILL CAN'T EXPLAIN WHAT'S GOING ON, BUT, DAMN...
THAT BASTARD IS AHEAD OF ME...
...AND HE PRACTICALLY SLEPT THROUGH THAT DOWNHILL SLOPE. THERE'S LESS THAN A MILE TO GO.

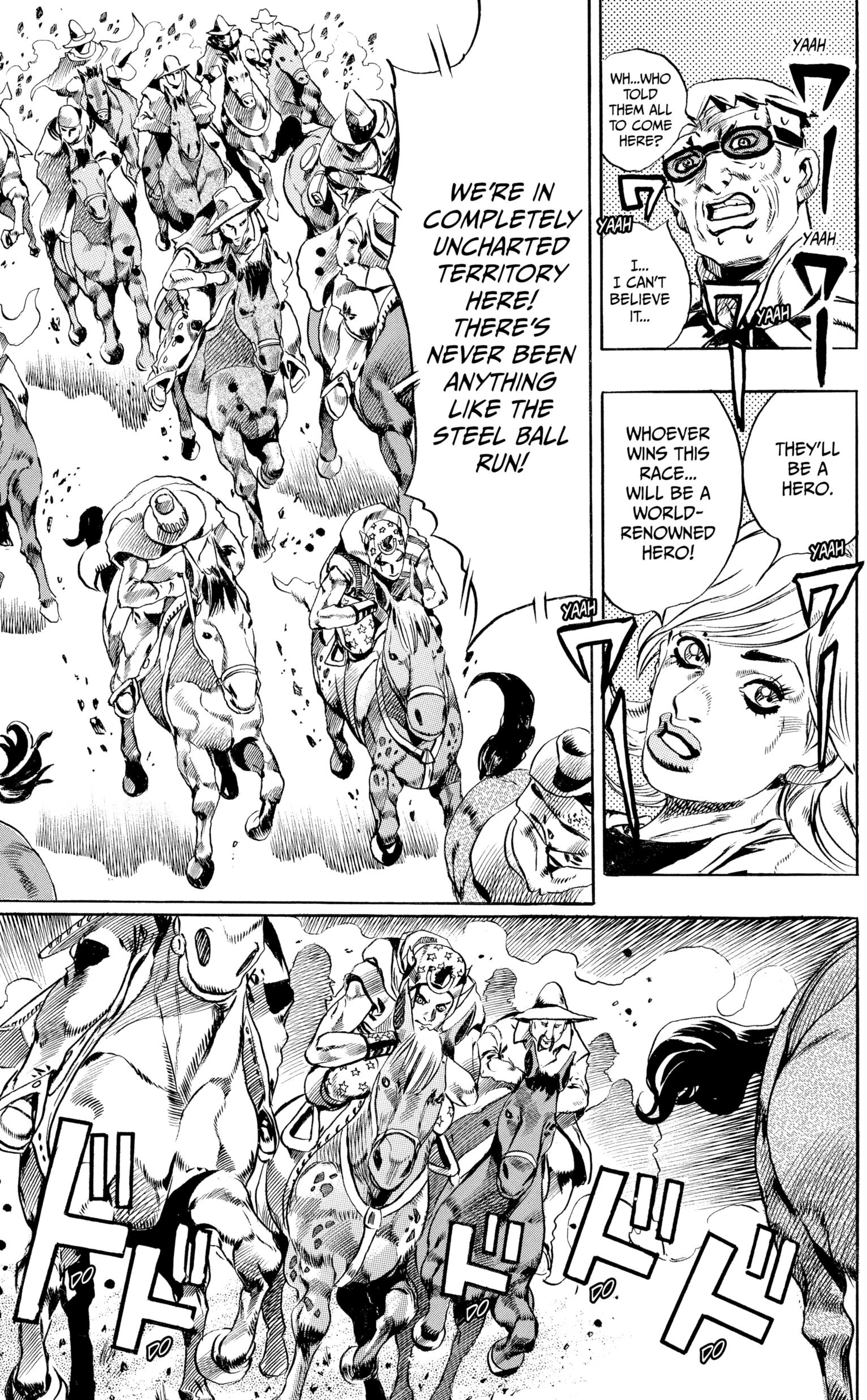

THAT RUNNER AND HIS SHORTCUT THROWS A WRENCH IN THINGS, BUT...
...ULTIMATELY, MY *TRUE RIVAL* FOR THE FIRST STAGE IS THE GUY WHO'S WAY TOO HAPPY-GO-LUCKY.
HE'S THE ONLY ONE I NEED TO WORRY ABOUT.
THE GROVE.
THE DEAD COW.
THE DELAYED BOULDER TRAP.
THAT'S TOO MANY COINCIDENCES!
SOMETHING MUST BE HELPING HIM.
I SAW SOMEONE AT A CASINO ONCE WHO BET ON *RED* IN ROULETTE 18 TIMES IN A ROW AND WON EVERY TIME.
HE WASN'T CHEATING OR ANYTHING. IT WAS JUST DUMB LUCK.
THERE'S SOME KIND OF *FORCE* PROTECTING THIS MAN!
THAT'S THE KEY.
I NEED TO FIND SOME WAY TO PUT A STOP TO HIS *LUCKY STREAK.*
HEY, POCOLOCO!
YEAH?

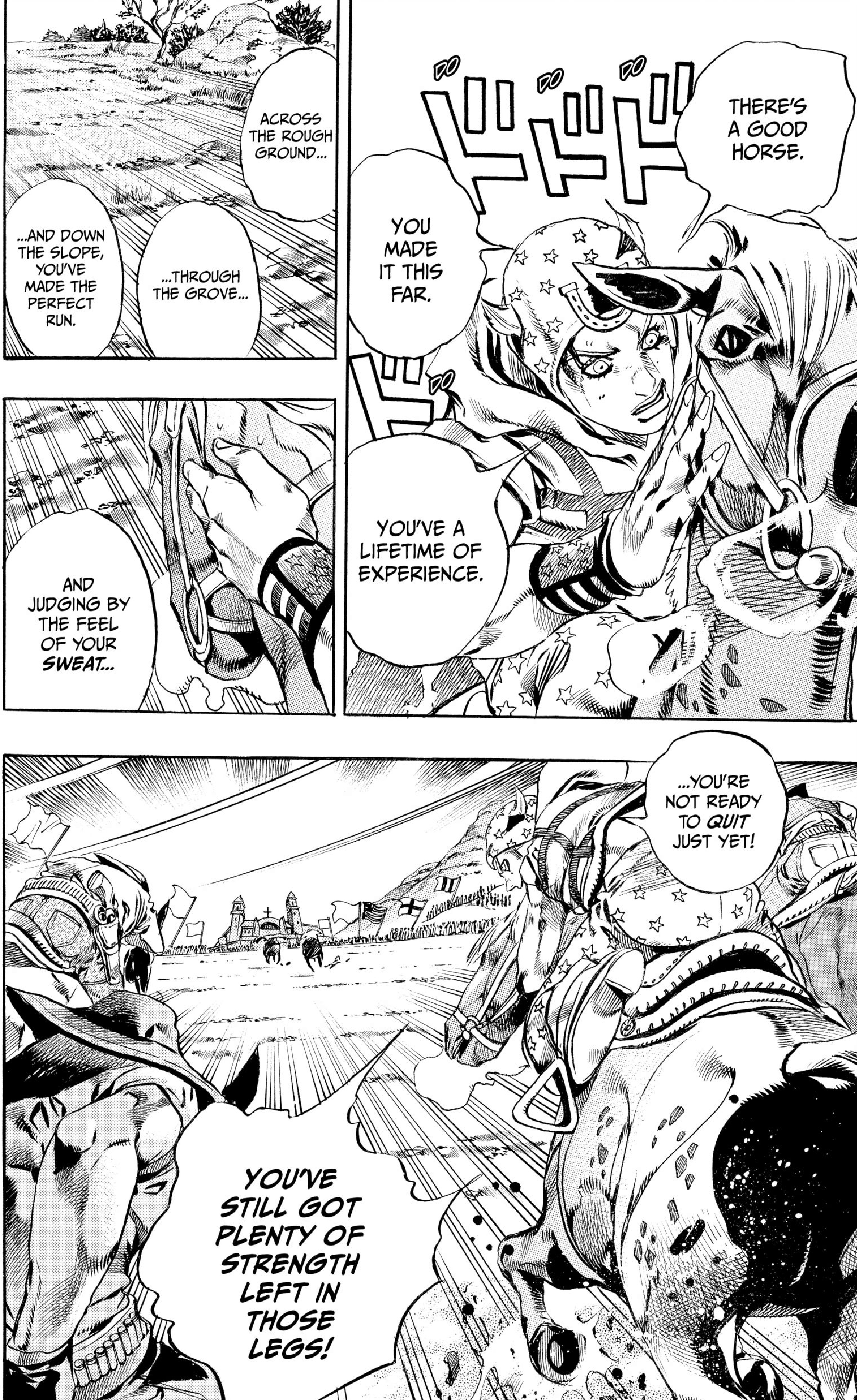

YOU KNOW I'LL PROTECT YOU FROM ANYTHING, RIGHT?
SO JUST GO FOR IT! DO WHATEVER YOU WANT!
RUN FULL SPEED AHEAD! THE ONLY THING WAITING FOR YOU AT THE FINISH LINE IS MORE GOOD LUCK!
VWOOM
YEAH! YEAAAH!!
THAT DOES IT...
MY HORSE IS A NATURAL-BORN PACESETTER!
I CAN DEBATE WHAT TO DO ABOUT THIS GUY ALL DAY...
...BUT I'M NEVER GONNA WIN BY SITTING BACK AND STARING AT HIS REAR END.
LET'S RUN!

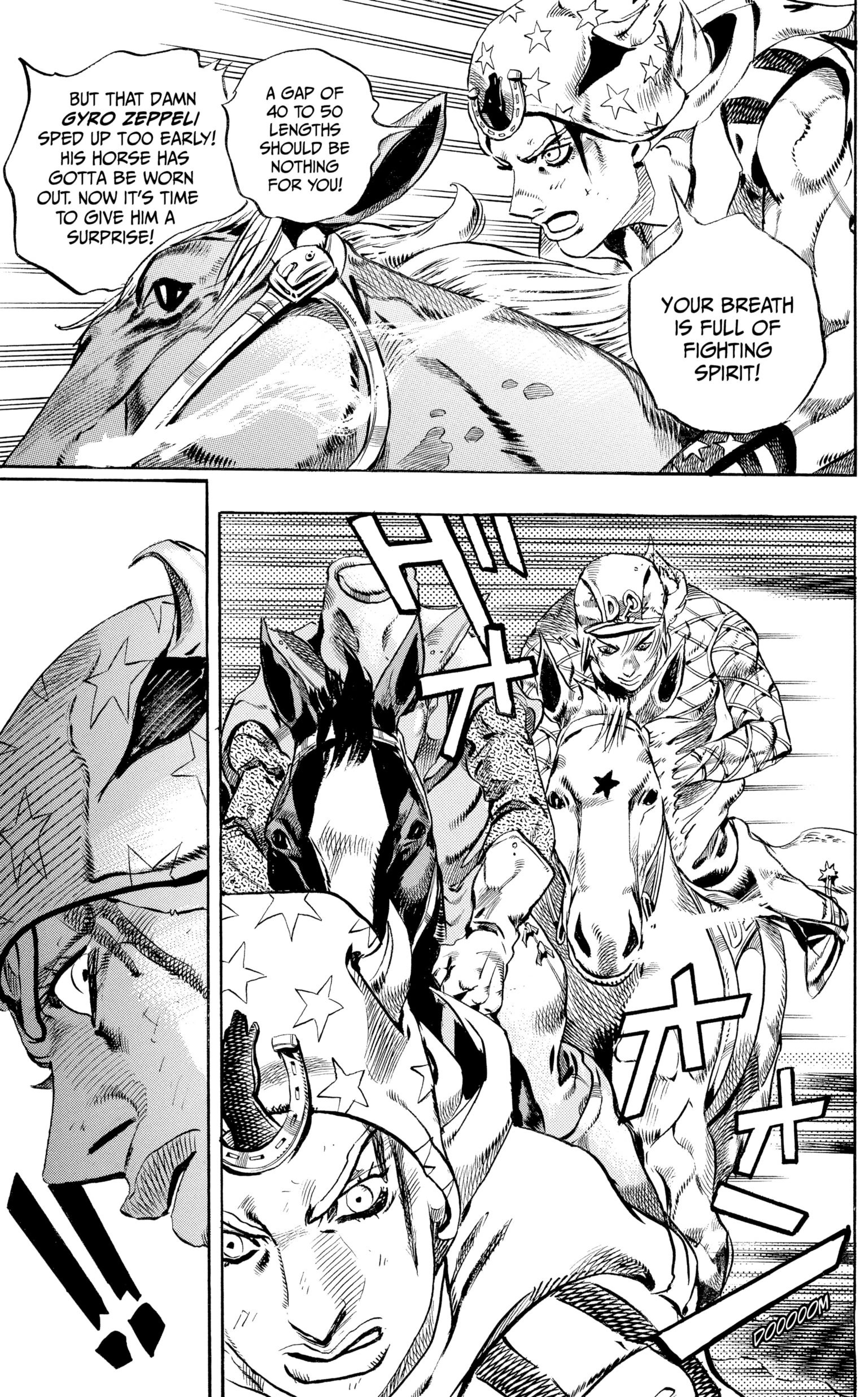
ド
ー
OOOM
ZOOO
HE'S PULLING AHEAD! AND NOW HE'S IN THE LEAD!
GYRO'S MAKING ANOTHER BREAK FOR IT!
VWOOOOOM
ドドゴ
オオ
HE'S MAKING HIS MOVE! HE'S SPEEDING UP!
ISN'T THIS TOO EARLY THOUGH?! WILL THIS MOVE BACKFIRE? HE'S STILL ALMOST A FULL MILE FROM THE FINISH!
!
!
!
AND LOOK AT THAT! WE'RE FINALLY GETTING OUR FIRST LOOK AT THE STRAIGHT-AWAY!
THE FINAL STRETCH... BUT WHAT'S THAT?!

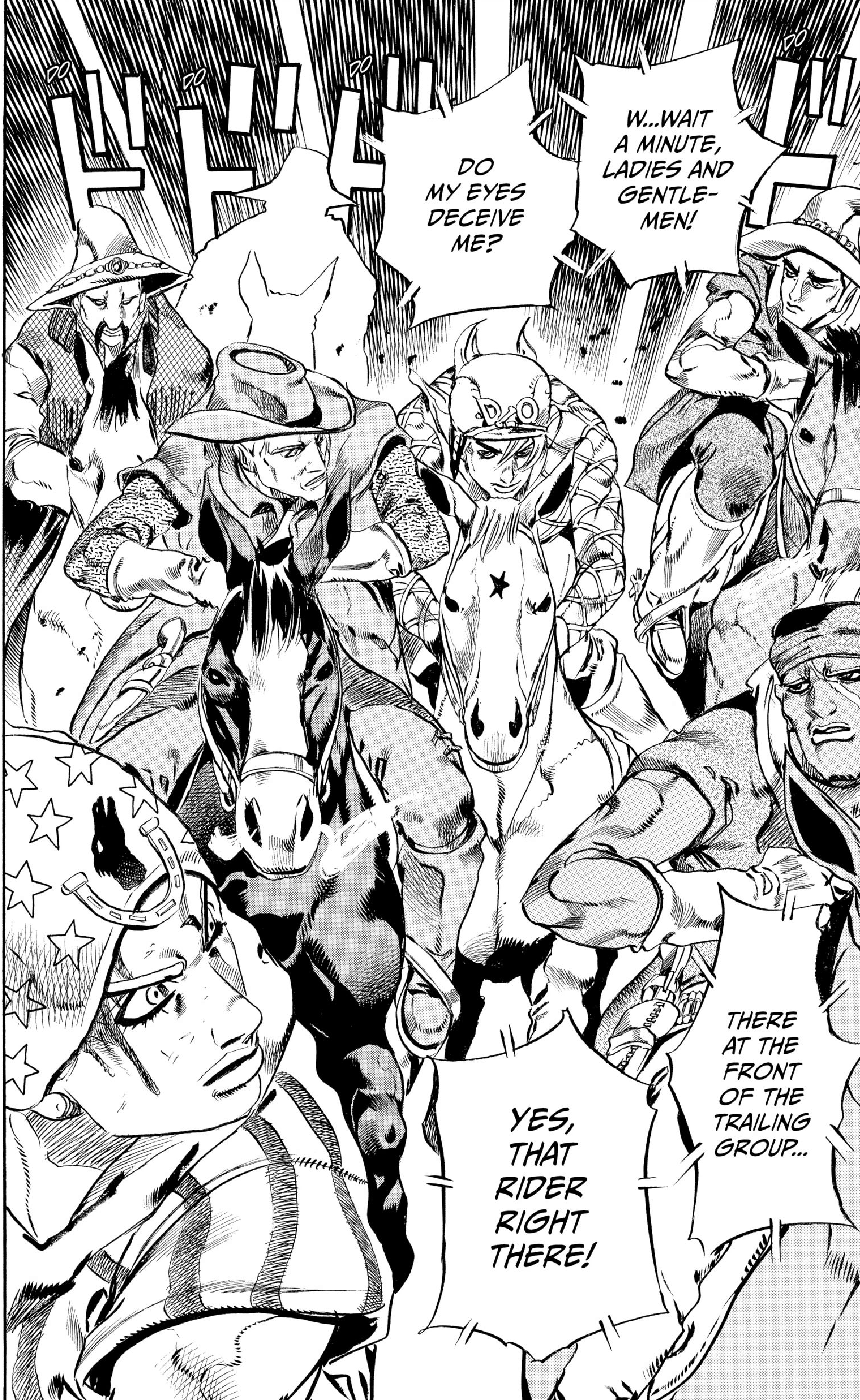
FWOOOO
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
W... WHAT IS THIS?
ALL THESE PEOPLE...
I HAD NO IDEA THERE WOULD BE SO MANY.

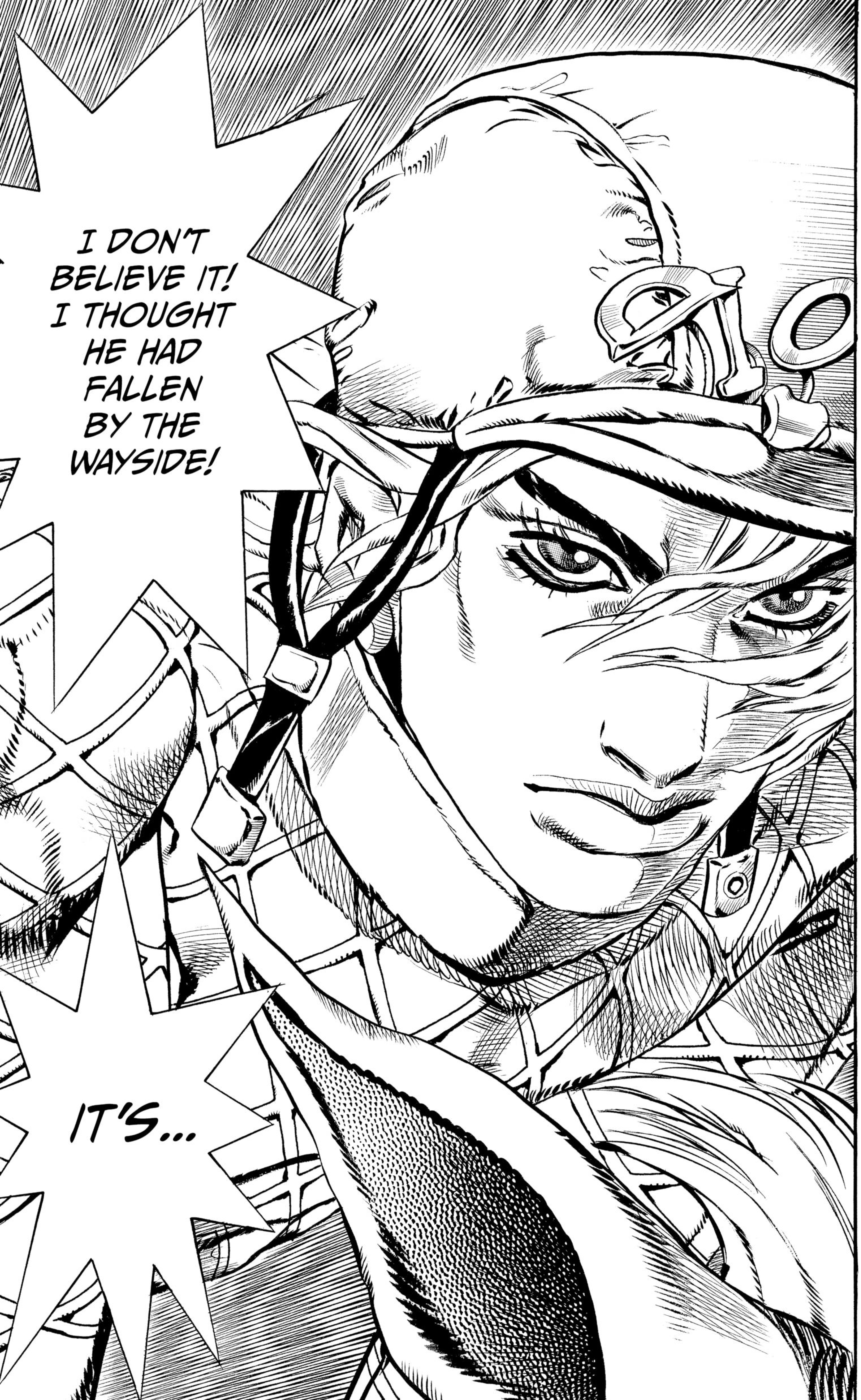

INCREDIBLE! AS THE STRAIGHTAWAY COMES INTO VIEW, WE'RE GREETED WITH THE VIEW OF AN ENORMOUS CROWD!
AT THE VERY WESTERN EDGE OF OUR COUNTRY... AT AN ABANDONED CHURCH AT THE EDGE OF THE VAST WILDERNESS...
WHO COULD HAVE EXPECTED SO MANY PEOPLE WOULD COME TO SEE THIS FIRST-STAGE FINISH?
THE CROWD IS GOING WILD! THERE MUST BE 10,000 PEOPLE HERE— NO, AT LEAST 20,000! THE CROWD IS SEVERAL TIMES LARGER THAN AT THE OPENING CEREMONY!
THIS IS BEYOND OUR WILDEST EXPECTATIONS! I COULD NEVER HOPE TO COUNT THE SHEER NUMBER OF PEOPLE GATHERED HERE!
YAAH
VWOOOOOOO
SAN DIEGO NEWYORK
STEEL BALL RUN RACE
GOAL
STEEL BALL RUN RACE


YAAH
WH...WHO TOLD THEM ALL TO COME HERE?
YAAH
YAAH
I... I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
YAAH
THEY'LL BE A HERO.
WHOEVER WINS THIS RACE... WILL BE A WORLD-RENOWNED HERO!
YAAH
YAAH
WE'RE IN COMPLETELY UNCHARTED TERRITORY HERE! THERE'S NEVER BEEN ANYTHING LIKE THE STEEL BALL RUN!
DO
DO
DO
DO
DO
DO

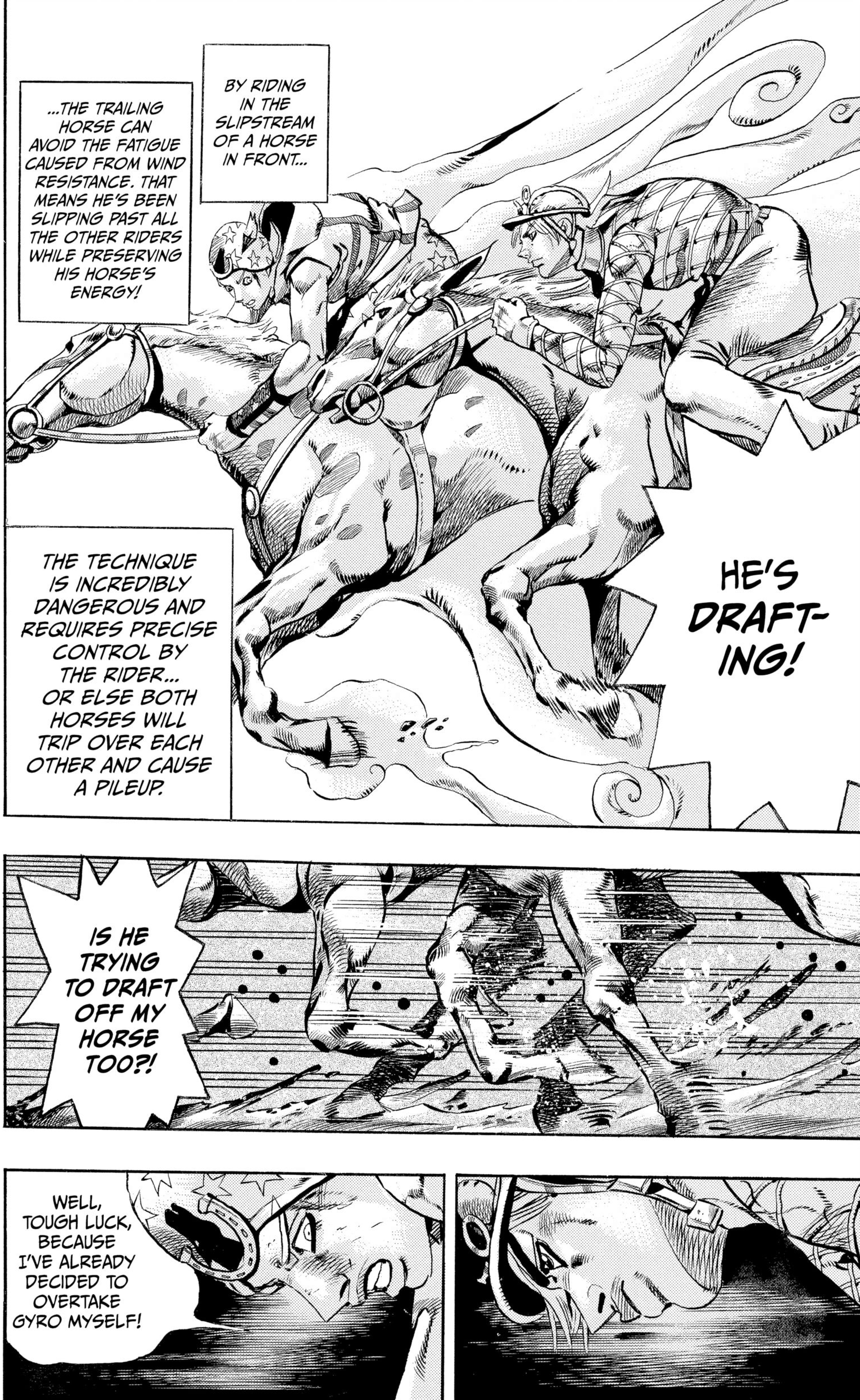

DO DO DO
ドドド
THERE'S A GOOD HORSE.
YOU MADE IT THIS FAR.
DO
ドド
YOU'VE A LIFETIME OF EXPERIENCE.
ACROSS THE ROUGH GROUND...
...THROUGH THE GROVE...
...AND DOWN THE SLOPE, YOU'VE MADE THE PERFECT RUN.
AND JUDGING BY THE FEEL OF YOUR *SWEAT*...
...YOU'RE NOT READY TO *QUIT* JUST YET!
YOU'VE STILL GOT PLENTY OF STRENGTH LEFT IN THOSE LEGS!

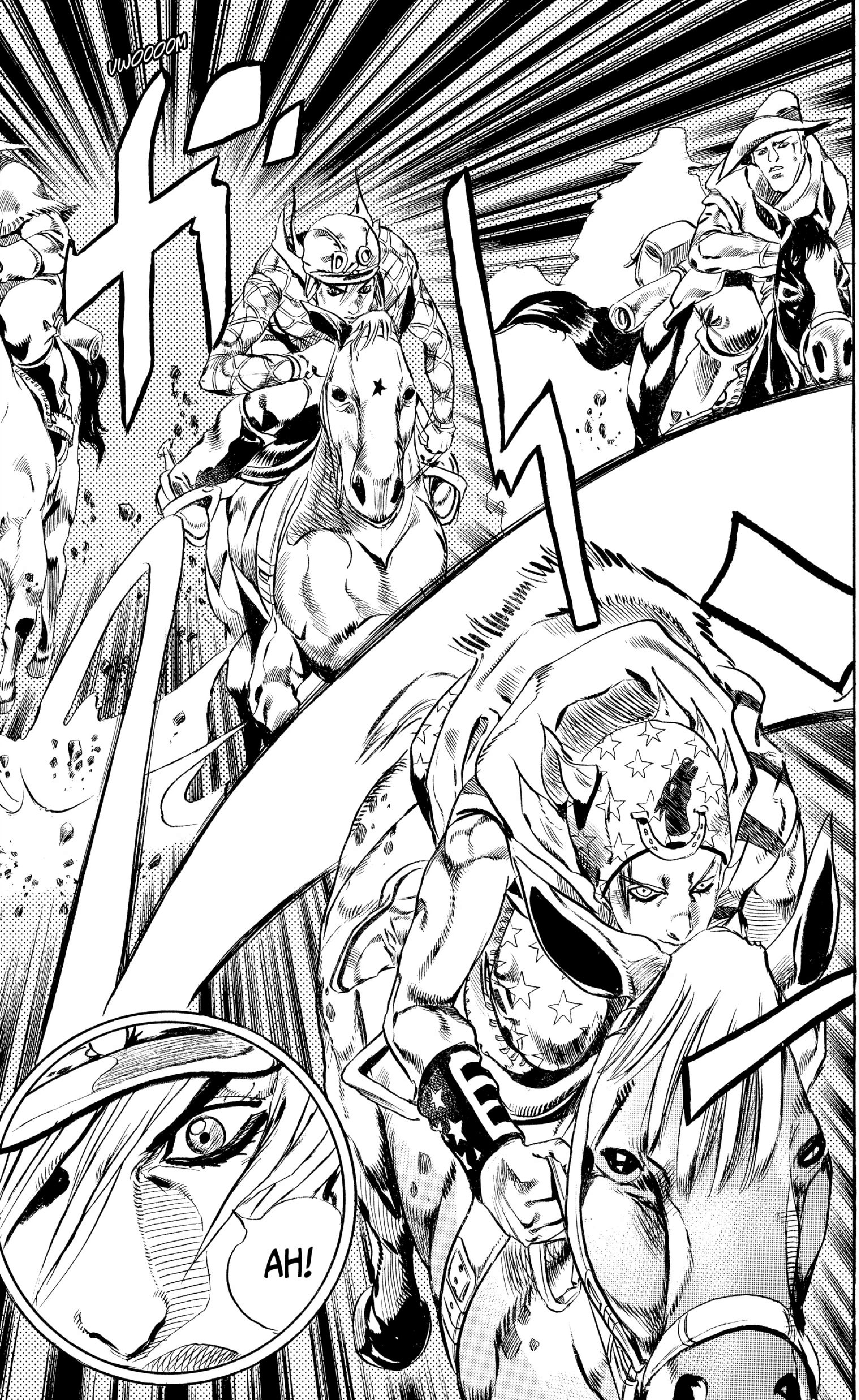

A GAP OF 40 TO 50 LENGTHS SHOULD BE NOTHING FOR YOU!
BUT THAT DAMN *GYRO ZEPPELI* SPED UP TOO EARLY! HIS HORSE HAS GOTTA BE WORN OUT. NOW IT'S TIME TO GIVE HIM A SURPRISE!
YOUR BREATH IS FULL OF FIGHTING SPIRIT!
!!
DOOOOOM

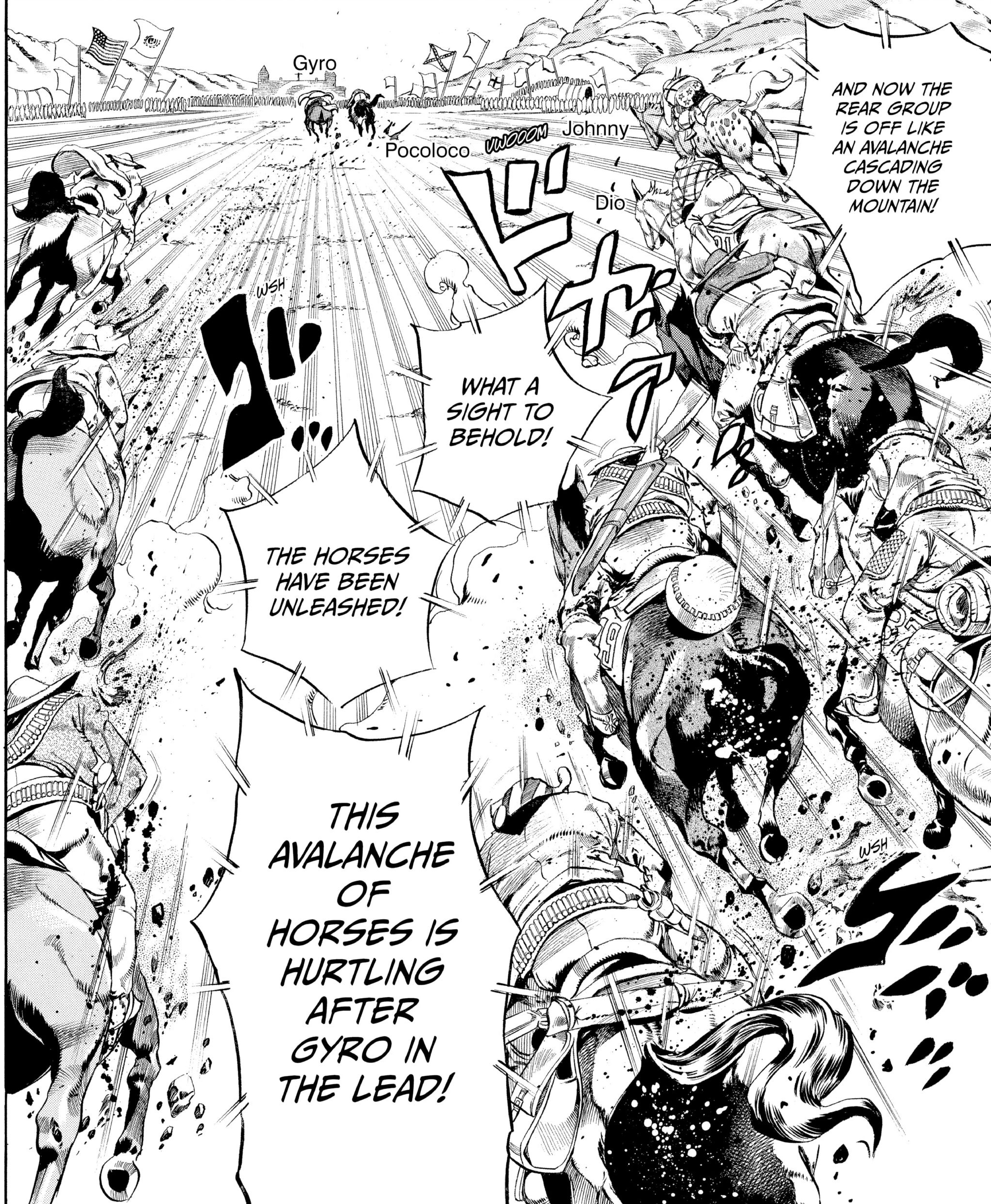

ドドドド
DO DO DO DO
W...WAIT A MINUTE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!
DO MY EYES DECEIVE ME?
DIO
THERE AT THE FRONT OF THE TRAILING GROUP...
YES, THAT RIDER RIGHT THERE!

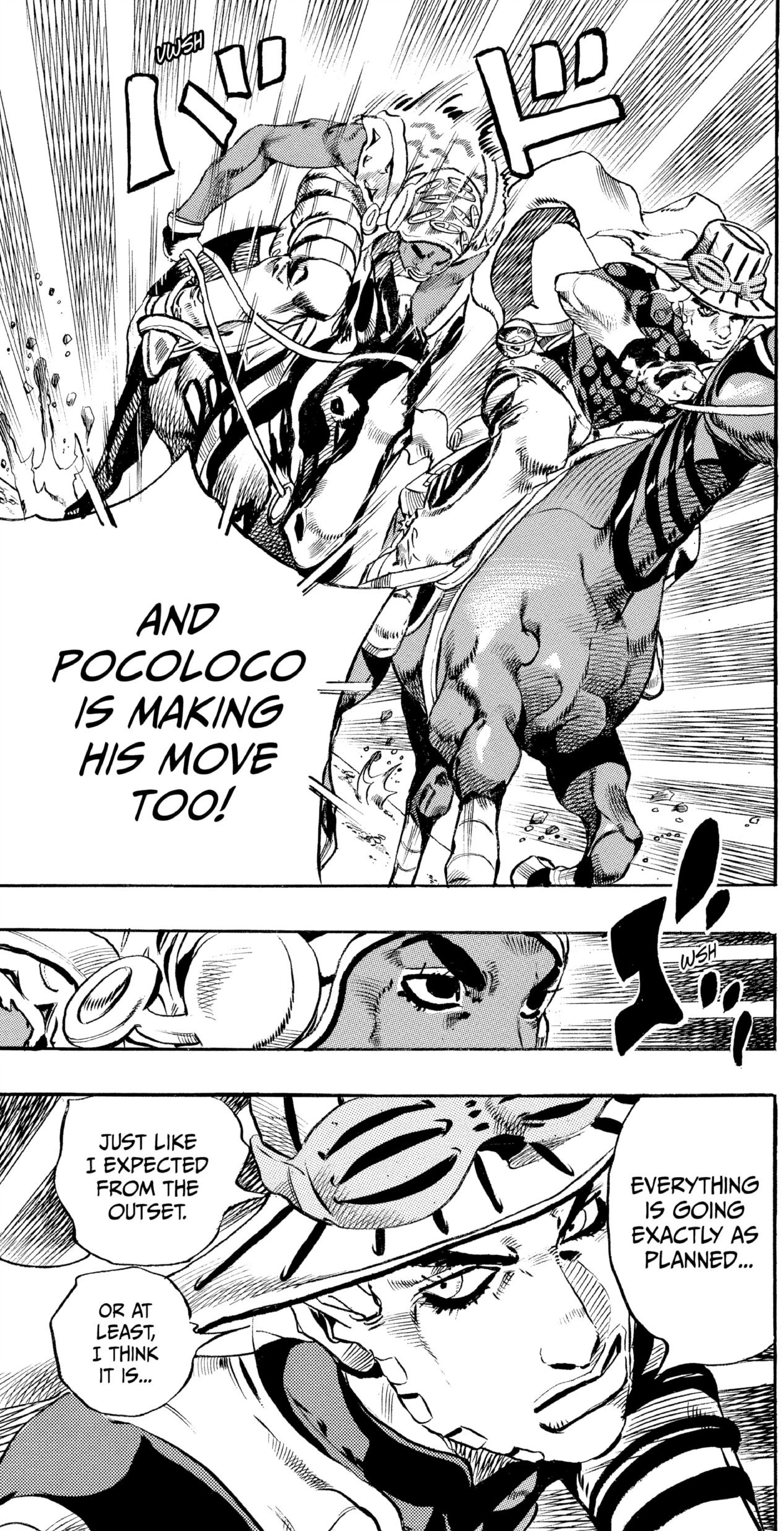

I DON'T BELIEVE IT! I THOUGHT HE HAD FALLEN BY THE WAYSIDE!
IT'S...

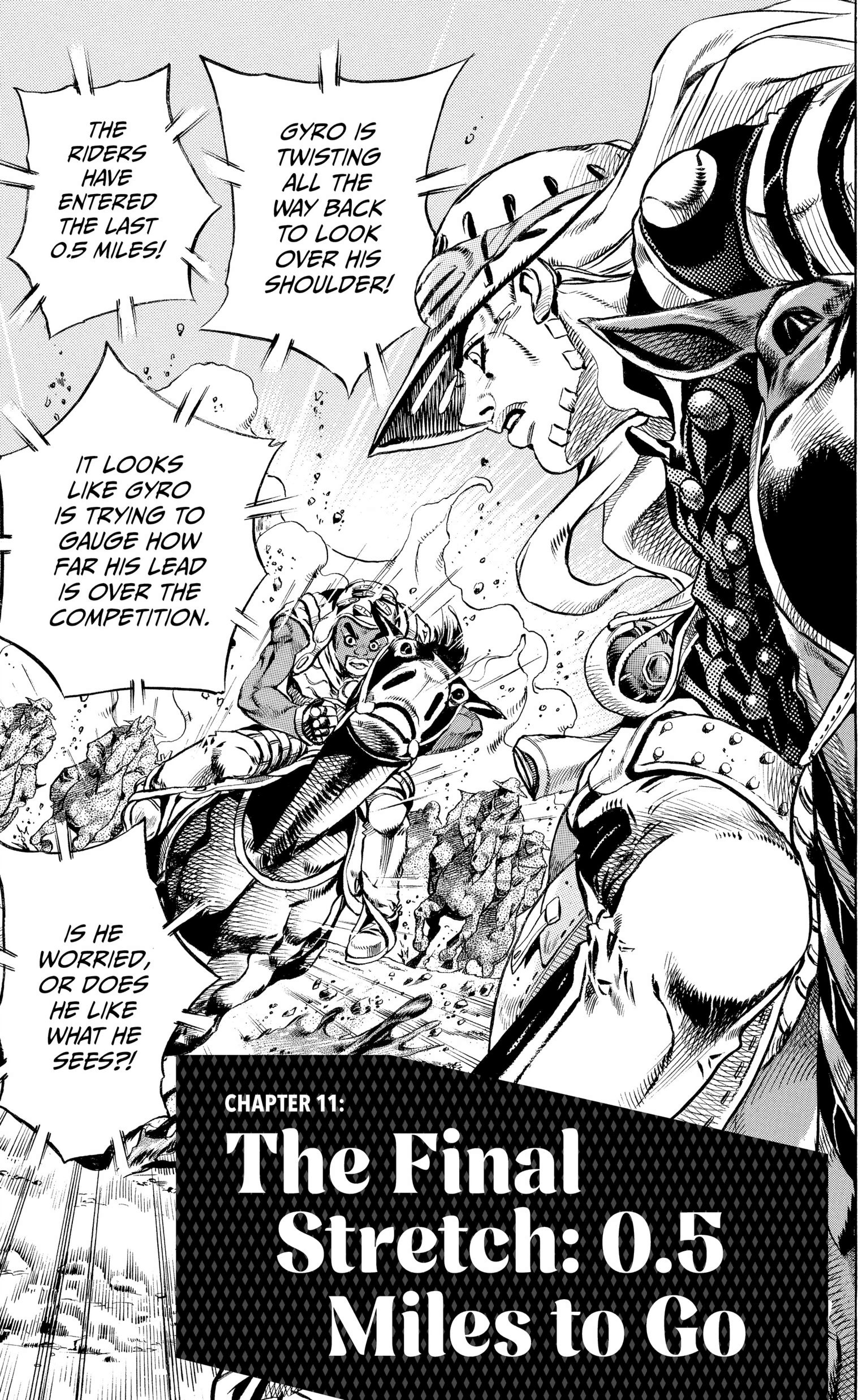
THE YOUNG ENGLISH ARISTOCRAT AND STAR JOCKEY HAD FALLEN BEHIND AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE ARROYO BRIDGE...
...BUT NOW HE'S MAKING HIS WAY BACK! WHEN NO ONE WAS LOOKING, HE RECOUPED EVERY SECOND HE LOST! HOW ON EARTH DID HE DO IT?!
516
THAT'S RIGHT, IT'S DIEGO BRANDO! DIO IS MOVING UP THE PACK!
...DIO!!
HIM AGAIN...
I SEE WHAT HE'S DOING!
IS THIS HOW HE MADE HIS WAY UP FROM THE BACK...?
DIO IS ON THE MOVE!
HE JUST PASSED ANOTHER RIDER!
NOT CONTENT WITH MERELY CATCHING UP, HE'S TRYING TO BREAK AHEAD OF THE GROUP!
ドシュン
VWOOSH


BY RIDING IN THE SLIPSTREAM OF A HORSE IN FRONT...
...THE TRAILING HORSE CAN AVOID THE FATIGUE CAUSED FROM WIND RESISTANCE. THAT MEANS HE'S BEEN SLIPPING PAST ALL THE OTHER RIDERS WHILE PRESERVING HIS HORSE'S ENERGY!
HE'S DRAFTING!
THE TECHNIQUE IS INCREDIBLY DANGEROUS AND REQUIRES PRECISE CONTROL BY THE RIDER... OR ELSE BOTH HORSES WILL TRIP OVER EACH OTHER AND CAUSE A PILEUP.
IS HE TRYING TO DRAFT OFF MY HORSE TOO?!
WELL, TOUGH LUCK, BECAUSE I'VE ALREADY DECIDED TO OVERTAKE GYRO MYSELF!


UWOOOOM
AH!


AND NOW THE REAR GROUP IS OFF LIKE AN AVALANCHE CASCADING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN!
Gyro
Johnny
Pocoloco
VWOOOM
Dio
WHAT A SIGHT TO BEHOLD!
WSH
THE HORSES HAVE BEEN UNLEASHED!
THIS AVALANCHE OF HORSES IS HURTLING AFTER GYRO IN THE LEAD!
WSH


VWSH
AND POCOLOCO IS MAKING HIS MOVE TOO!
WSH
EVERYTHING IS GOING EXACTLY AS PLANNED...
JUST LIKE I EXPECTED FROM THE OUTSET.
OR AT LEAST, I THINK IT IS...


GYRO IS TWISTING ALL THE WAY BACK TO LOOK OVER HIS SHOULDER!
THE RIDERS HAVE ENTERED THE LAST 0.5 MILES!
IT LOOKS LIKE GYRO IS TRYING TO GAUGE HOW FAR HIS LEAD IS OVER THE COMPETITION.
IS HE WORRIED, OR DOES HE LIKE WHAT HE SEES?!

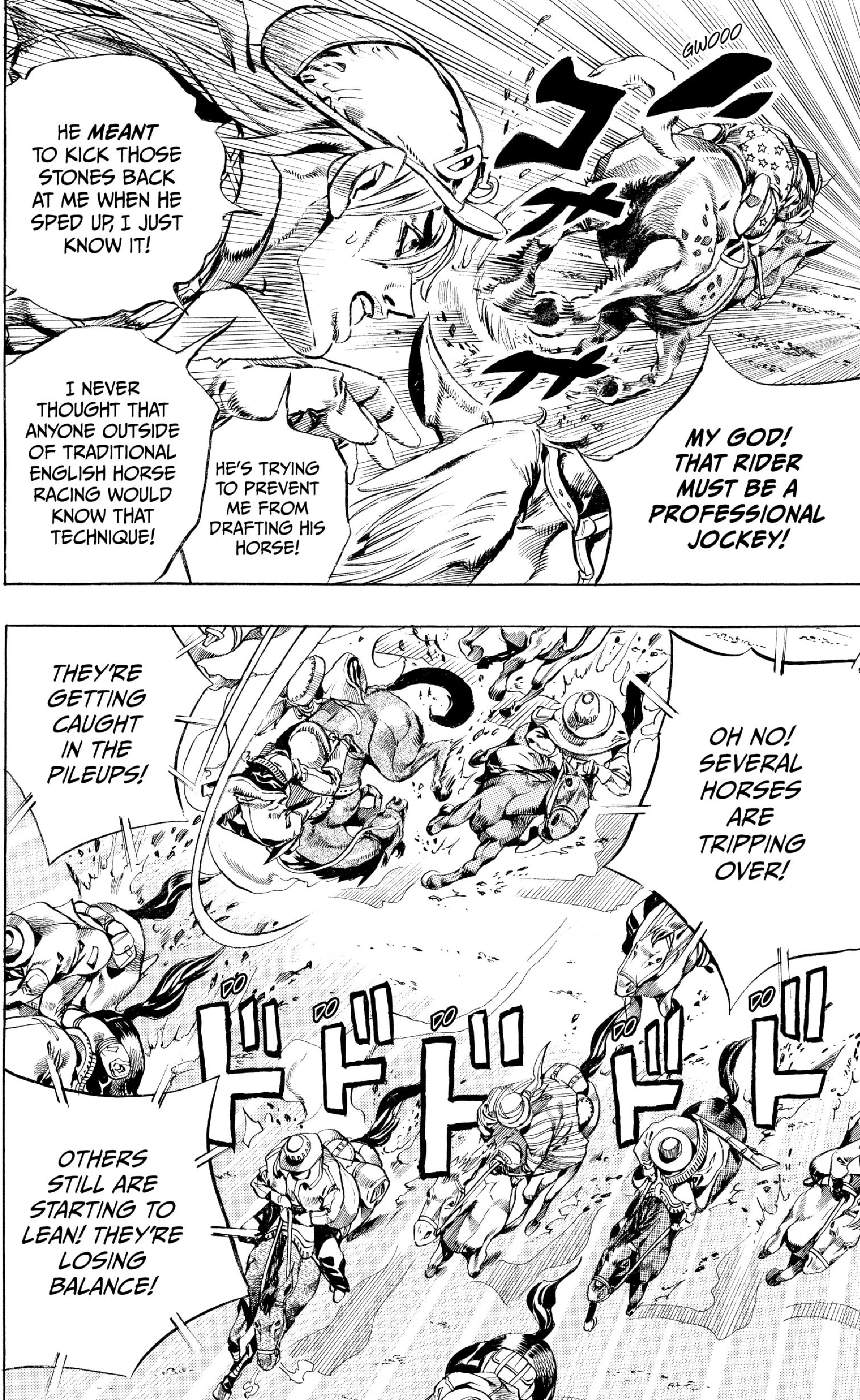
CHAPTER 11:

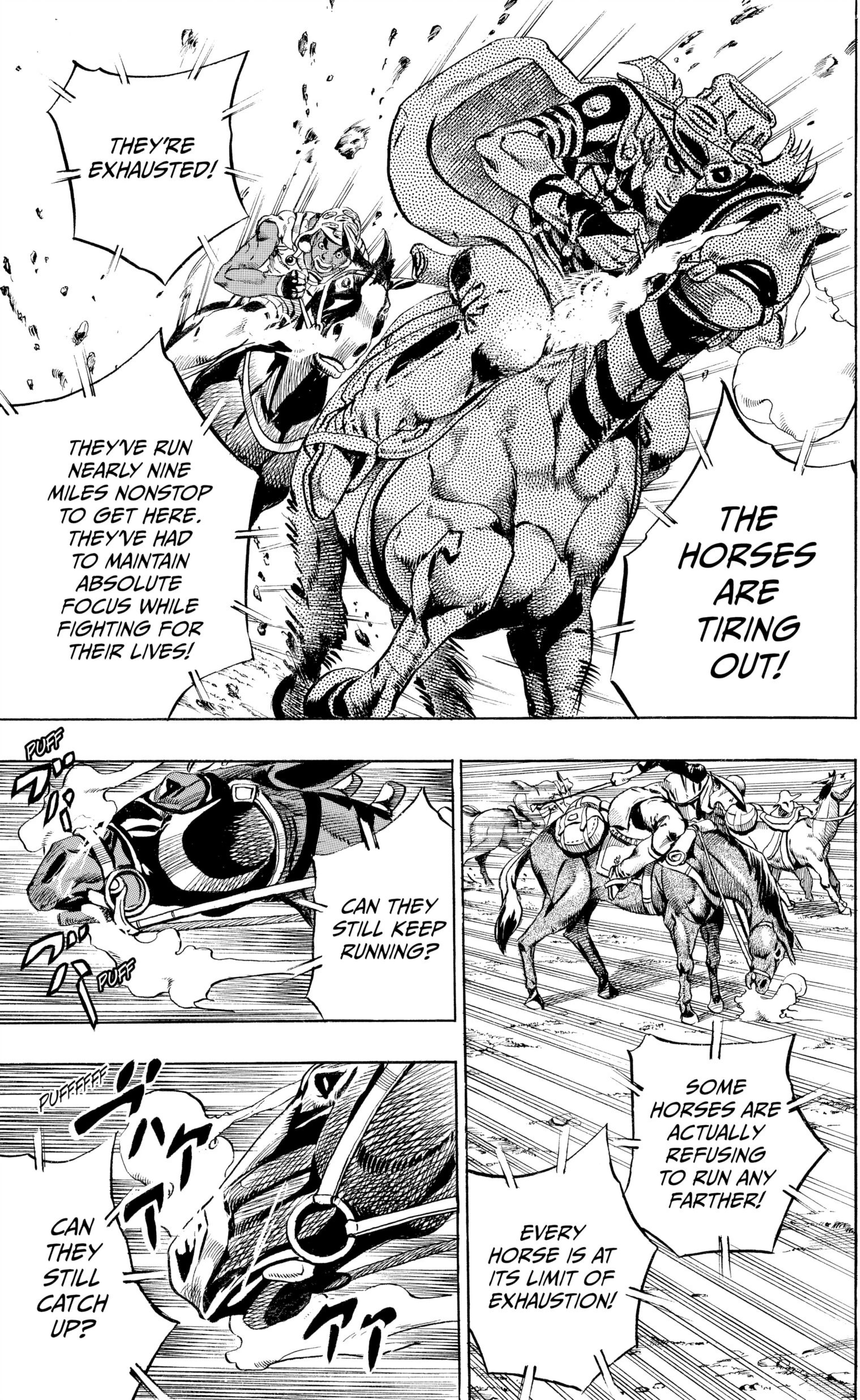
The Final Stretch: 0.5 Miles to Go

YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
AS THE SANTA ANA WINDS BLOW IN FROM MEXICO, THE VERITABLE AVALANCHE OF RIDERS ATTACK THE FINAL STRAIGHTAWAY TOWARD THE FINISH LINE!
Johnny
Dio
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
THE EXCITEMENT AND ENERGY ARE PALPABLE!
Pocoloco
Gyro
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
THE CROWD'S CRIES ARE LIKE A GREAT TIDAL WAVE CARRYING OUR RIDERS TO THE FINISH LINE!
DO DO DO
THEIR THUNDEROUS NOISE HAS COMPLETELY DROWNED OUT THE SOUND OF THE ARRIVING STEAM LOCOMOTIVE!
DO DO DO DO DO DO

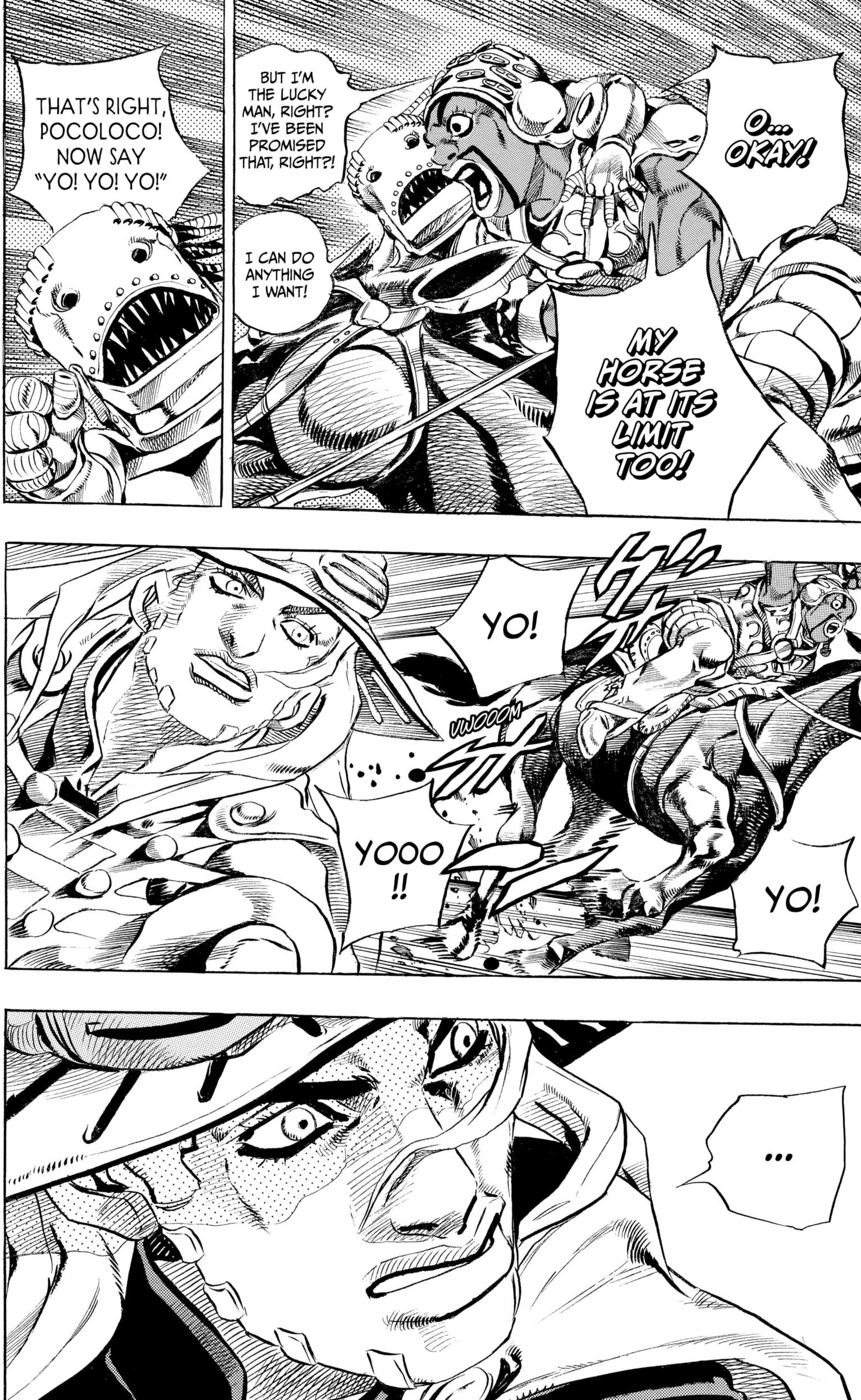
DAMN THIS BRIT JOCKEY, DIEGO BRANDO!
GWOOO
I'M TRYING AND TRYING TO OUTRUN HIM, BUT HE KEEPS ON USING MY HORSE TO SHIELD HIMSELF FROM THE WIND! HE JUST WON'T GO AWAY!
VWOOOM
OO
I KNOW WHAT HE'S TRYING TO DO.
GWOOOO
HE THINKS HE CAN STAY PLANTED ON MY REAR UNTIL JUST BEFORE THE FINISH LINE, WHEN HE'LL SUDDENLY LEAVE ME IN THE DUST.
BUT NOT IF I HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT!
GYRO ZEPPELI IS SURELY NEARING HIS LIMIT TOO! AND THE ONLY ONE WHO'S GONNA BEAT HIM...
SWOOM
WHAT ?!
HIS HORSE IS SINKING INTO THE MUD!

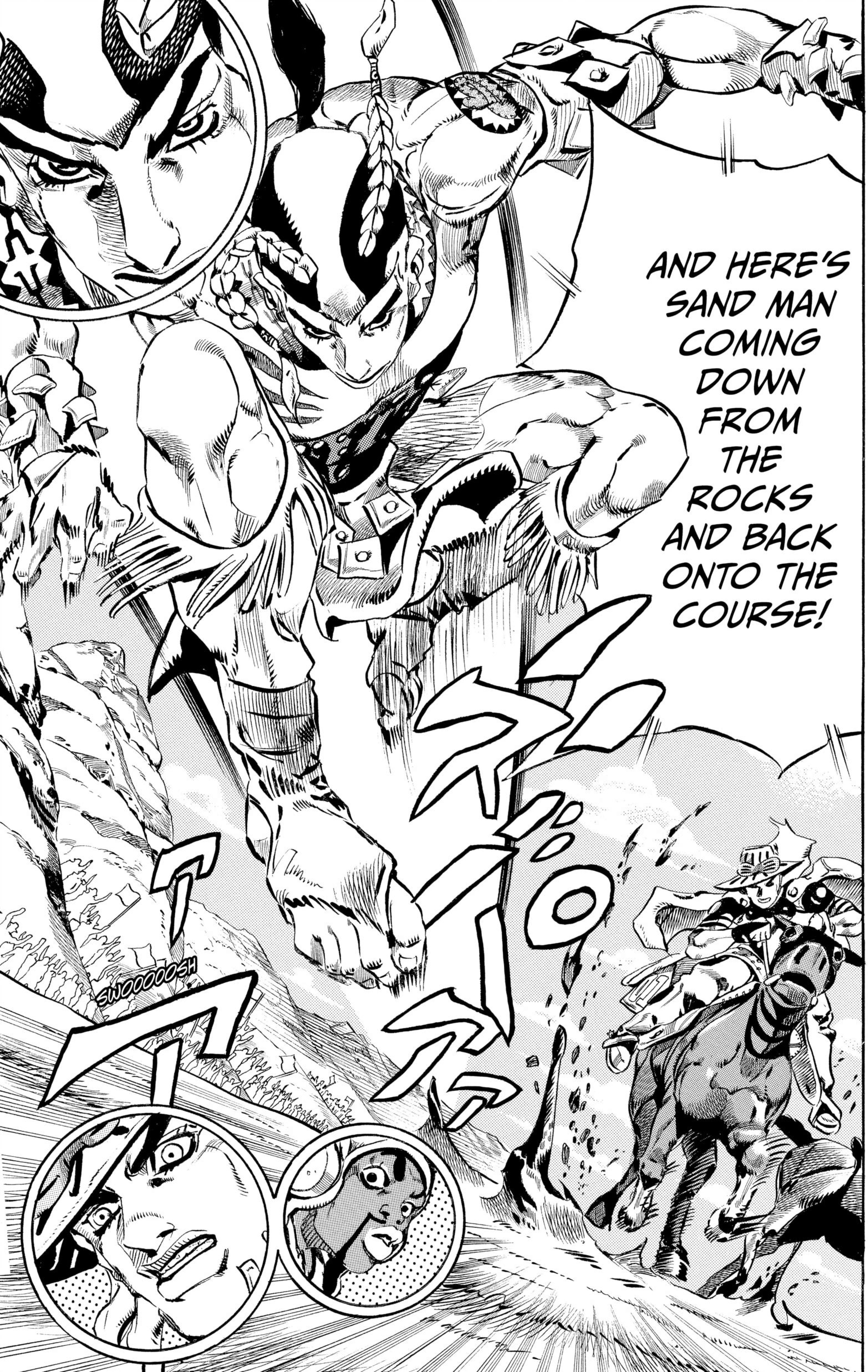
...IS ME! JOHNNY JOE-STAR !!
VWOOOM
!!
URGH !!
GAH!
VWIP
VWIP
VWIP
SMAK
R... ROCKS!
WOOSH


GWOOO
ゴオオ
MY GOD! THAT RIDER MUST BE A PROFESSIONAL JOCKEY!
HE *MEANT* TO KICK THOSE STONES BACK AT ME WHEN HE SPED UP, I JUST KNOW IT!
HE'S TRYING TO PREVENT ME FROM DRAFTING HIS HORSE!
I NEVER THOUGHT THAT ANYONE OUTSIDE OF TRADITIONAL ENGLISH HORSE RACING WOULD KNOW THAT TECHNIQUE!
OH NO! SEVERAL HORSES ARE TRIPPING OVER!
THEY'RE GETTING CAUGHT IN THE PILEUPS!
DO DO DO DO DO
ドドドドド
OTHERS STILL ARE STARTING TO LEAN! THEY'RE LOSING BALANCE!


THE HORSES ARE TIRING OUT!
THEY'RE EXHAUSTED!
THEY'VE RUN NEARLY NINE MILES NONSTOP TO GET HERE. THEY'VE HAD TO MAINTAIN ABSOLUTE FOCUS WHILE FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIVES!
SOME HORSES ARE ACTUALLY REFUSING TO RUN ANY FARTHER!
EVERY HORSE IS AT ITS LIMIT OF EXHAUSTION!
PUFF
PUFF
CAN THEY STILL KEEP RUNNING?
PUFFFFFFF
CAN THEY STILL CATCH UP?

オオオオオ
OOOOOM
ドヴ
VWOOO
オ
NO POINT RELYING ON **TECHNIQUES** ANYWAY.
AT THIS POINT IN THE RACE, THEY'RE USELESS.
ALL THAT MATTERS NOW IS WHAT'S IN THE HORSES' **LEGS**.
HOW MUCH **STRENGTH** HAVE WE MANAGED TO PRESERVE FOR THIS MOMENT?
THAT'S ALL THERE IS! THE HORSE WITH THE STRONGEST LEGS WILL DETERMINE THE WINNER OF THIS RACE! NOTHING MORE!
HEY, POCO-LOCO.
GO LEFT!
HUH?
BUT WHY?
?!
JUST GO TO THE LEFT ALREADY!
GO AROUND HIS LEFT!


O... OKAY!
MY HORSE IS AT ITS LIMIT TOO!
BUT I'M THE LUCKY MAN, RIGHT? I'VE BEEN PROMISED THAT, RIGHT?!
I CAN DO ANYTHING I WANT!
THAT'S RIGHT, POCOLOCO! NOW SAY "YO! YO! YO!"
YO!
YO!
VWOOOM
YOOO!!
...


AND HERE'S SAND MAN COMING DOWN FROM THE ROCKS AND BACK ONTO THE COURSE!
SWOOOOOSH

VWOOOM
GOAL
SAND MAN HAS RETURNED! JUST LOOK AT THOSE MUSCLES EXPLODING WITH POWER! HE'S AHEAD OF GYRO! HE'S REJOINED THE RACE IN THE LEAD!
HE'S EIGHT LENGTHS AHEAD!
SAND MAN HAS SUCCESSFULLY REJOINED THE RACE WITH THE FINISH LINE IN SIGHT! HE'S RUNNING AT 25 MILES PER HOUR!
CAN ANYONE REALLY RUN THIS FAST?!
CAN SAND MAN OUTRUN AND OUTLAST THE HORSES ALL THE WAY TO THE FINISH LINE?!
BUT THE RACE ISN'T OVER YET, FOLKS! THERE ARE NO MORE SHORTCUTS!
NOW DIO MAKES HIS MOVE!
LESS THAN A QUARTER MILE REMAINS TO THE FINISH LINE! DIO'S SPEED IS INCREDIBLE!
DIO IS GOING FOR IT!

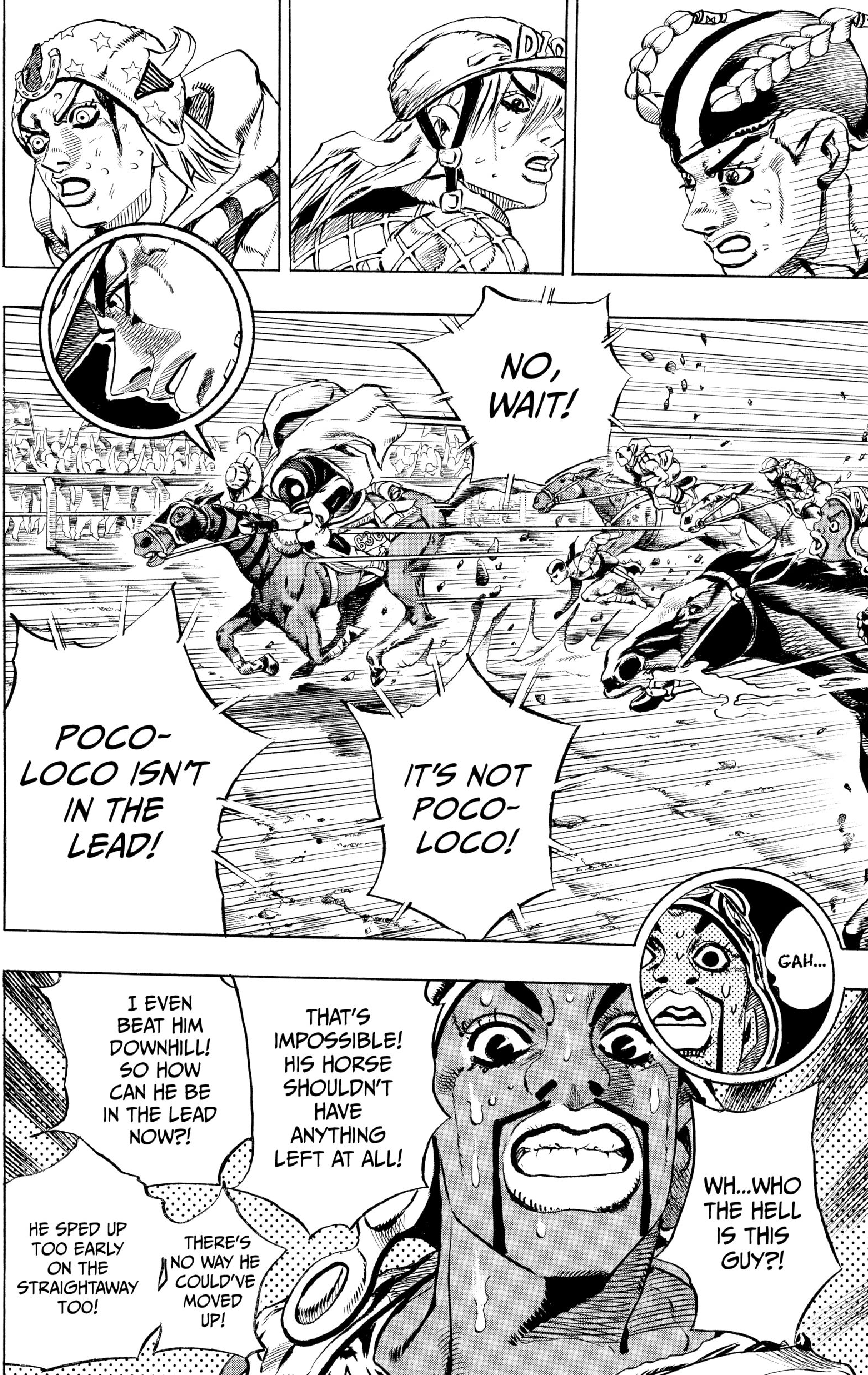
01
BUT WAIT, THERE'S ANOTHER RIDER SIDE BY SIDE WITH DIO!
NO, NOW HE'S AHEAD!
THE RIDER DOESN'T HAVE A NUMBERED SADDLECLOTH! WE DON'T KNOW HIS NAME!
ドドドド
DO
SEVEN LENGTHS BEHIND GYRO, THE UNNAMED RIDER IS ON THE ATTACK!
NOW FIVE LENGTHS!
ドドドド
DO
GYRO IS MATCHING SAND MAN'S PACE, BUT THE HORSES BEHIND ARE BARRELING TOWARD HIM LIKE THE DEVIL ON HIS HEELS!

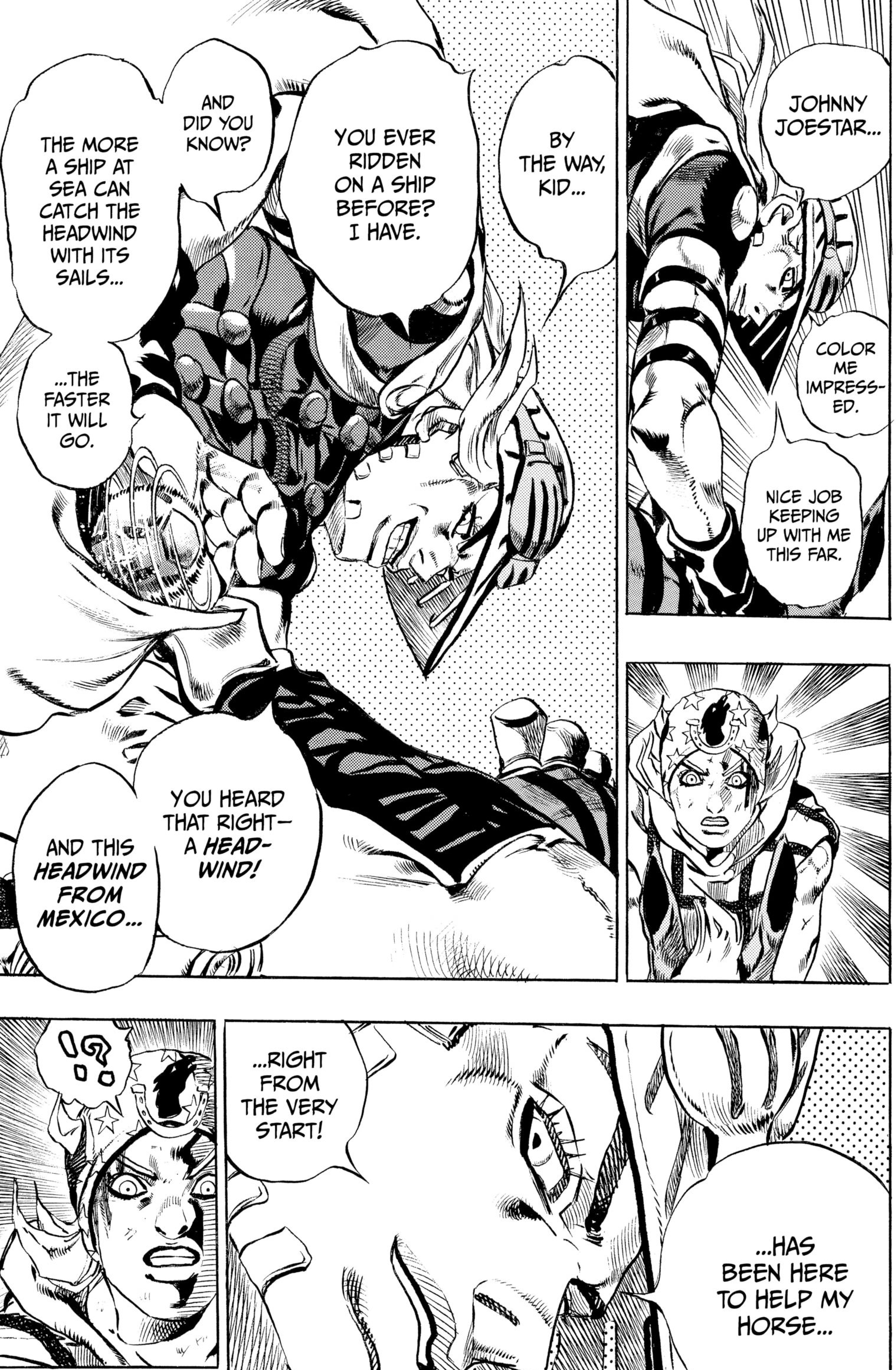
ドゴオオ
VWOOOM
POCOLOCO IS ATTEMPTING TO OVERTAKE GYRO ON THE LEFT!
ドドドドドドドドド
DO DO DO DO DO DO DO DO
FOUR RIDERS ARE GUNNING FOR SAND MAN! THEY'RE CLOSING IN!
GYRO IS THREE LENGTHS BEHIND SAND MAN!

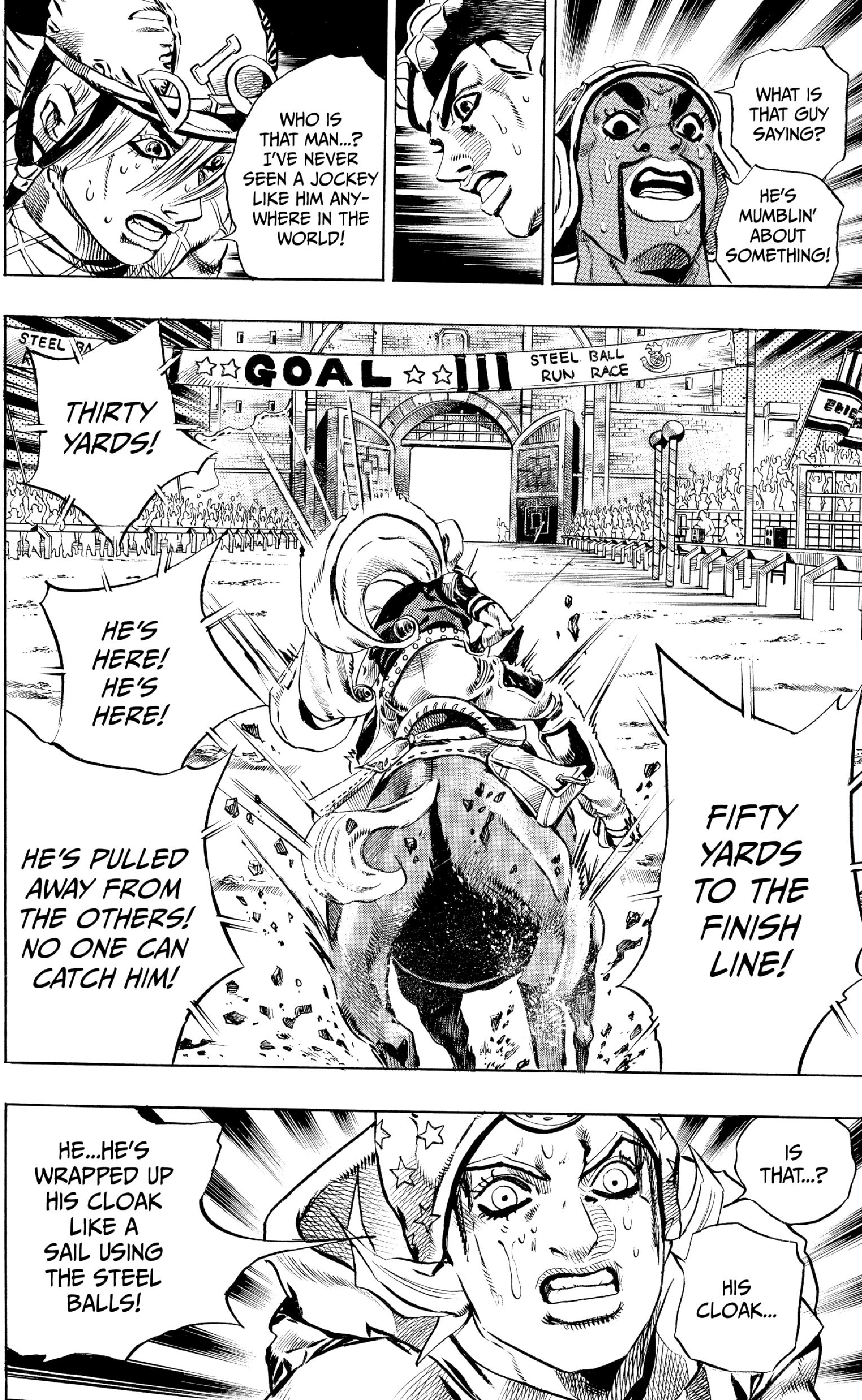
THEY'RE NECK AND NECK!
SHOULDER TO SHOULDER!
SIDE BY SIDE!
ALL RIGHT IN A ROW!
THE FOUR RIDERS BEHIND SAND MAN ARE ALL LINED UP!
DIO
NEVER AGAIN WILL I BE ABLE TO RETURN HOME.
BUT-MARK MY WORDS, SIS...I WILL WIN THIS RACE.
I'LL WIN IT FOR THE GREAT SPIRIT OF THE EARTH...FOR THE SPIRITS OF OUR FATHER AND OUR ANCESTORS...
VWOOOM
EVERYONE, PLEASE GIVE ME STRENGTH AND COURAGE!

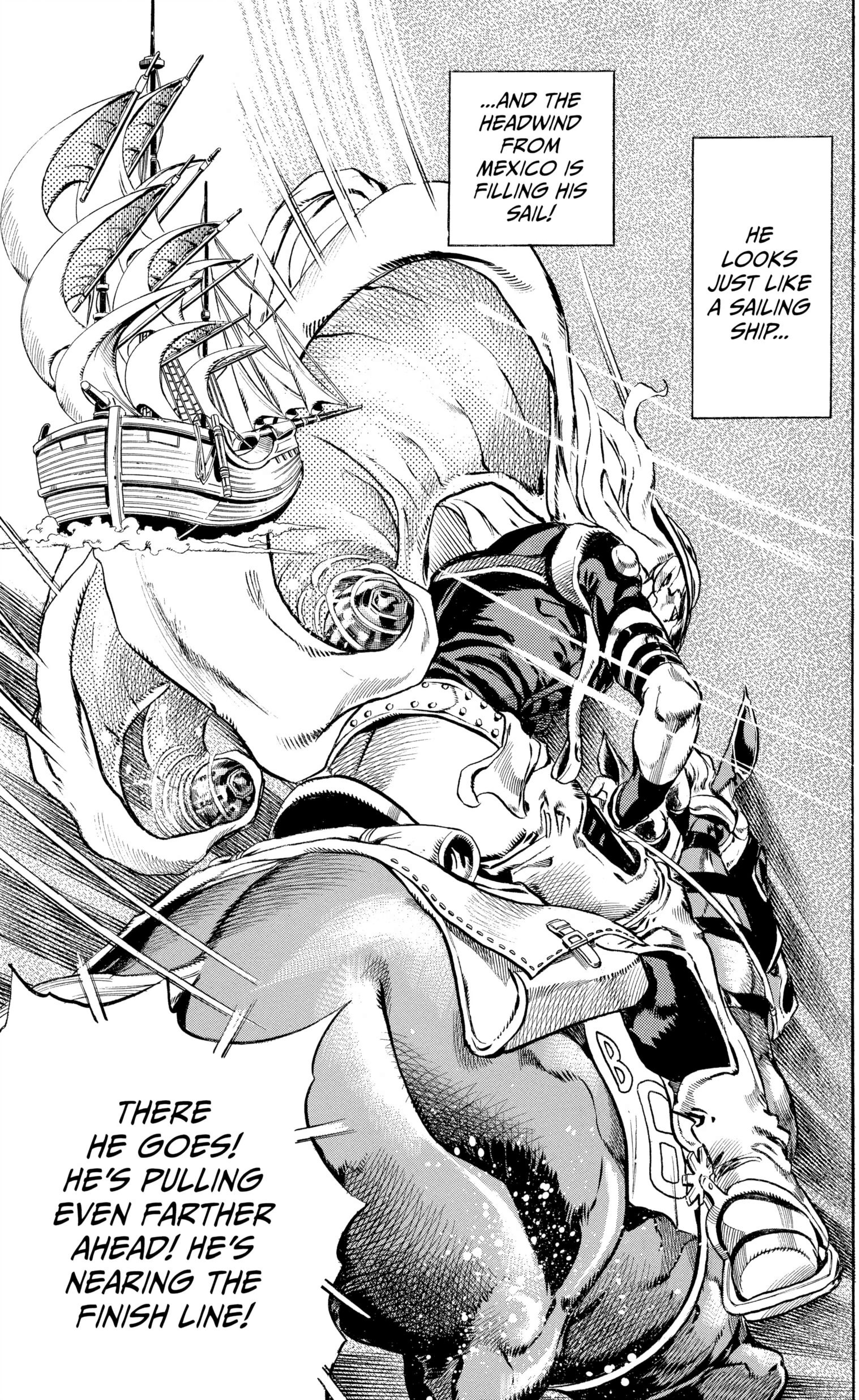
YAAH
ALL FOUR HORSES ARE LINED UP AT THE NOSE!
YAAH
YAAH
GOAL
SAND MAN SPEEDS UP ONCE AGAIN!
DO
DO
DIO PULLS AHEAD!
DO
YAAH
YAAH
NOW IT'S GYRO BY A WHISKER!
YAAH
YAAH
THEY'RE ENTERING THE LAST HUNDRED YARDS!
DO
DO
WHO WILL TAKE FIRST PLACE?!
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
AS THE RIDERS NEAR THE FINISH LINE, THIS FEROCIOUS BACK-AND-FORTH BATTLE IS FIERCER THAN EVER BEFORE!
ALL RIGHT, POCO-LOCO.
DON'T HOLD BACK NOW.
KEEP GOING JUST LIKE THIS! THAT WIN IS YOURS!
JUST KEEP PUSHING STRAIGHT AHEAD — RIGHT ONTO THAT HALF-BURIED LOG!

WHAT IS THIS?! POCOLOCO JUST LEAPED INTO THE AIR!
VWOOOSH
THERE WAS A DEAD TREE!
HE RAN ONTO THAT **DEAD TREE** AND USED IT LIKE A **SPRINGBOARD** TO LAUNCH HIMSELF AHEAD!
ZWOOOM
HE'S OUT IN FRONT!
HE'S TAKEN THE LEAD!!
POCOLOCO IS IN THE... HUH?!
ZOOM
HUH?


NO, WAIT!
IT'S NOT POCO-LOCO!
POCO-LOCO ISN'T IN THE LEAD!
GAH...
WH...WHO THE HELL IS THIS GUY?!
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! HIS HORSE SHOULDN'T HAVE ANYTHING LEFT AT ALL!
I EVEN BEAT HIM DOWNHILL! SO HOW CAN HE BE IN THE LEAD NOW?!
THERE'S NO WAY HE COULD'VE MOVED UP!
HE SPED UP TOO EARLY ON THE STRAIGHTAWAY TOO!


JOHNNY JOESTAR...
COLOR ME IMPRESSED.
NICE JOB KEEPING UP WITH ME THIS FAR.
BY THE WAY, KID...
YOU EVER RIDDEN ON A SHIP BEFORE? I HAVE.
AND DID YOU KNOW?
THE MORE A SHIP AT SEA CAN CATCH THE HEADWIND WITH ITS SAILS...
...THE FASTER IT WILL GO.
YOU HEARD THAT RIGHT—A *HEADWIND!*
AND THIS *HEADWIND FROM MEXICO...*
...HAS BEEN HERE TO HELP MY HORSE...
...RIGHT FROM THE VERY START!
!?

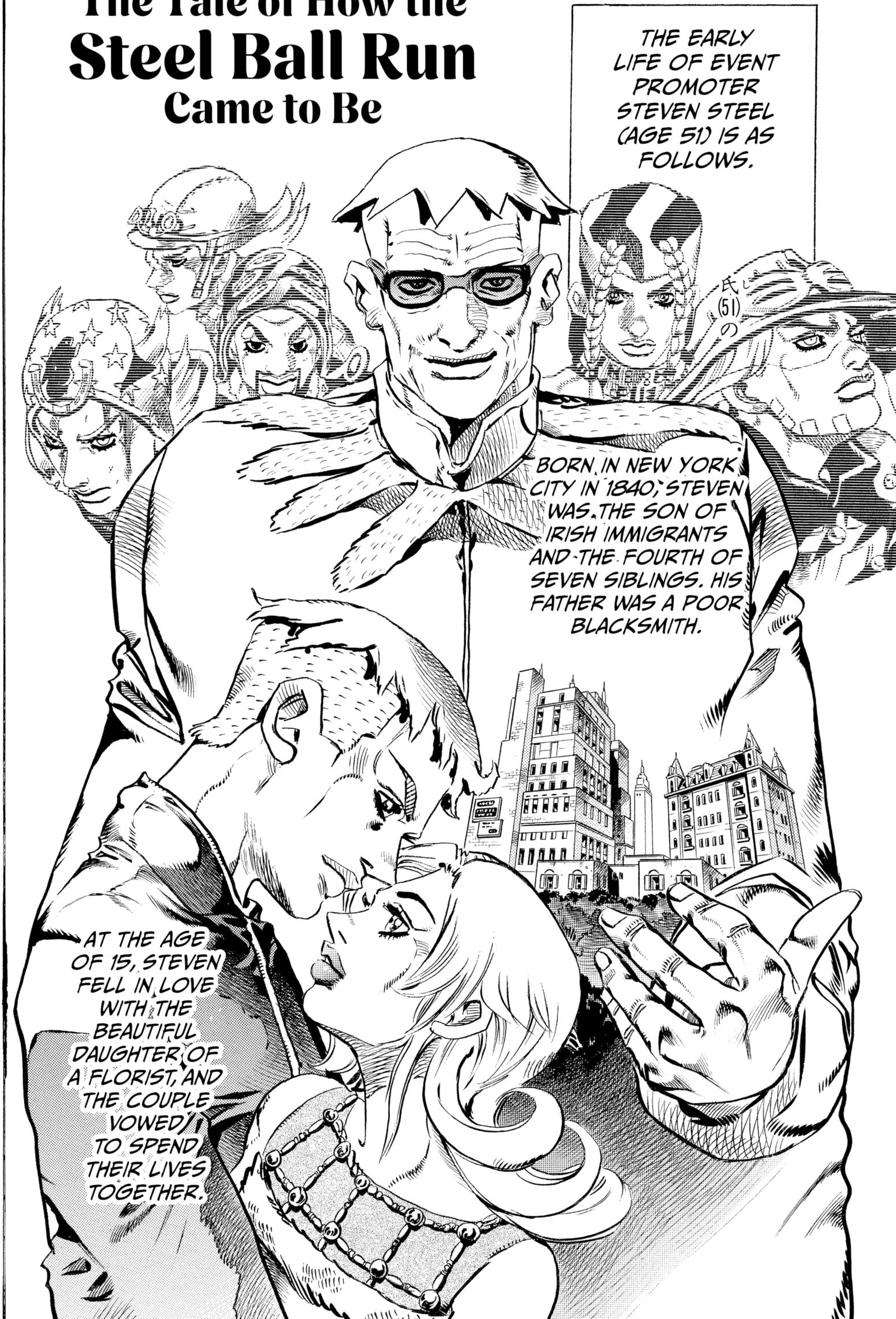

WHAT IS THAT GUY SAYING?
HE'S MUMBLIN' ABOUT SOMETHING!
WHO IS THAT MAN...? I'VE NEVER SEEN A JOCKEY LIKE HIM ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD!
GOAL
STEEL BALL RUN RACE
FIFTY YARDS TO THE FINISH LINE!
THIRTY YARDS!
HE'S HERE! HE'S HERE!
HE'S PULLED AWAY FROM THE OTHERS! NO ONE CAN CATCH HIM!
IS THAT...?
HIS CLOAK...
HE...HE'S WRAPPED UP HIS CLOAK LIKE A SAIL USING THE STEEL BALLS!

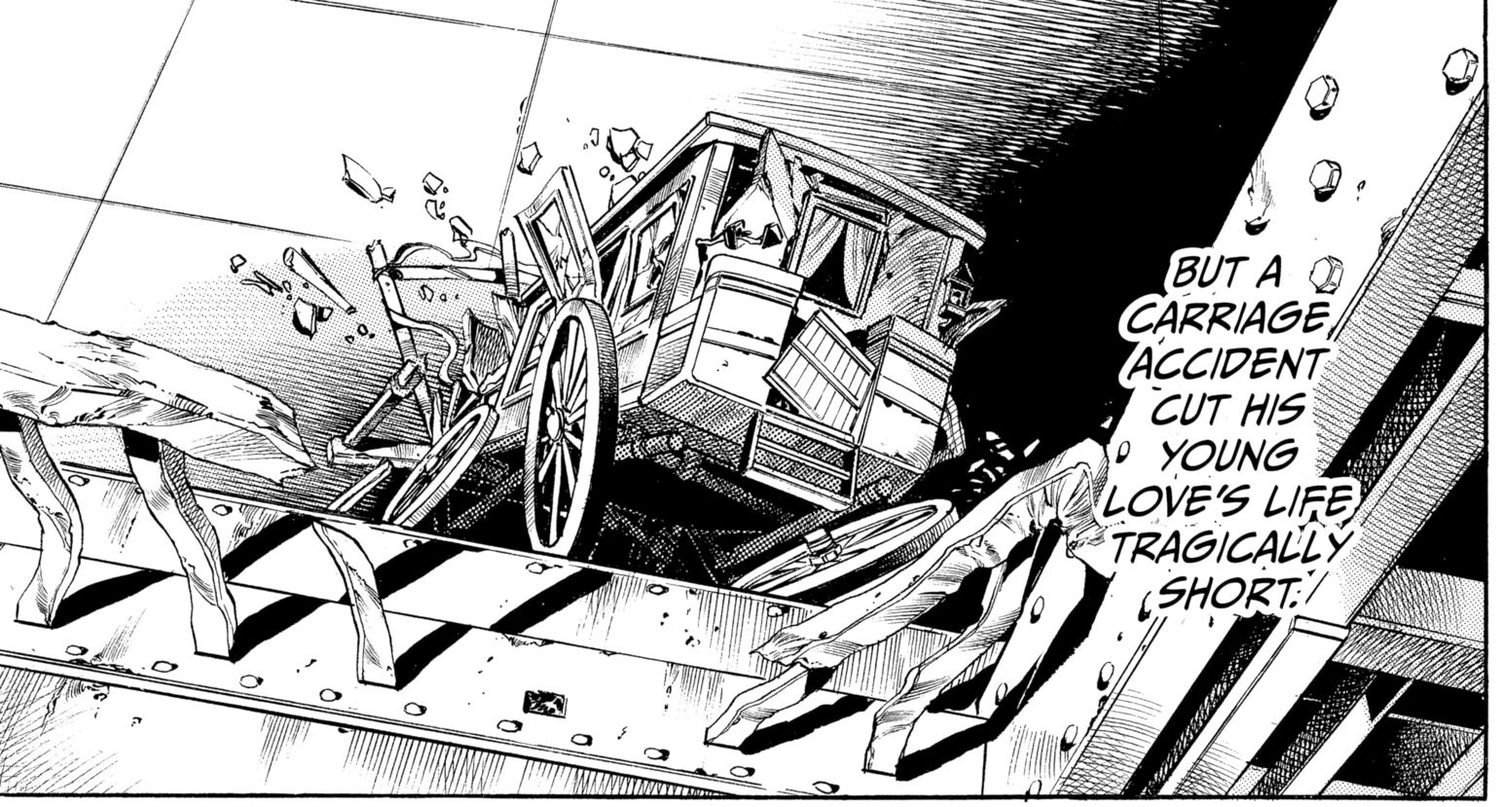

...AND THE HEADWIND FROM MEXICO IS FILLING HIS SAIL!
HE LOOKS JUST LIKE A SAILING SHIP...
THERE HE GOES! HE'S PULLING EVEN FARTHER AHEAD! HE'S NEARING THE FINISH LINE!

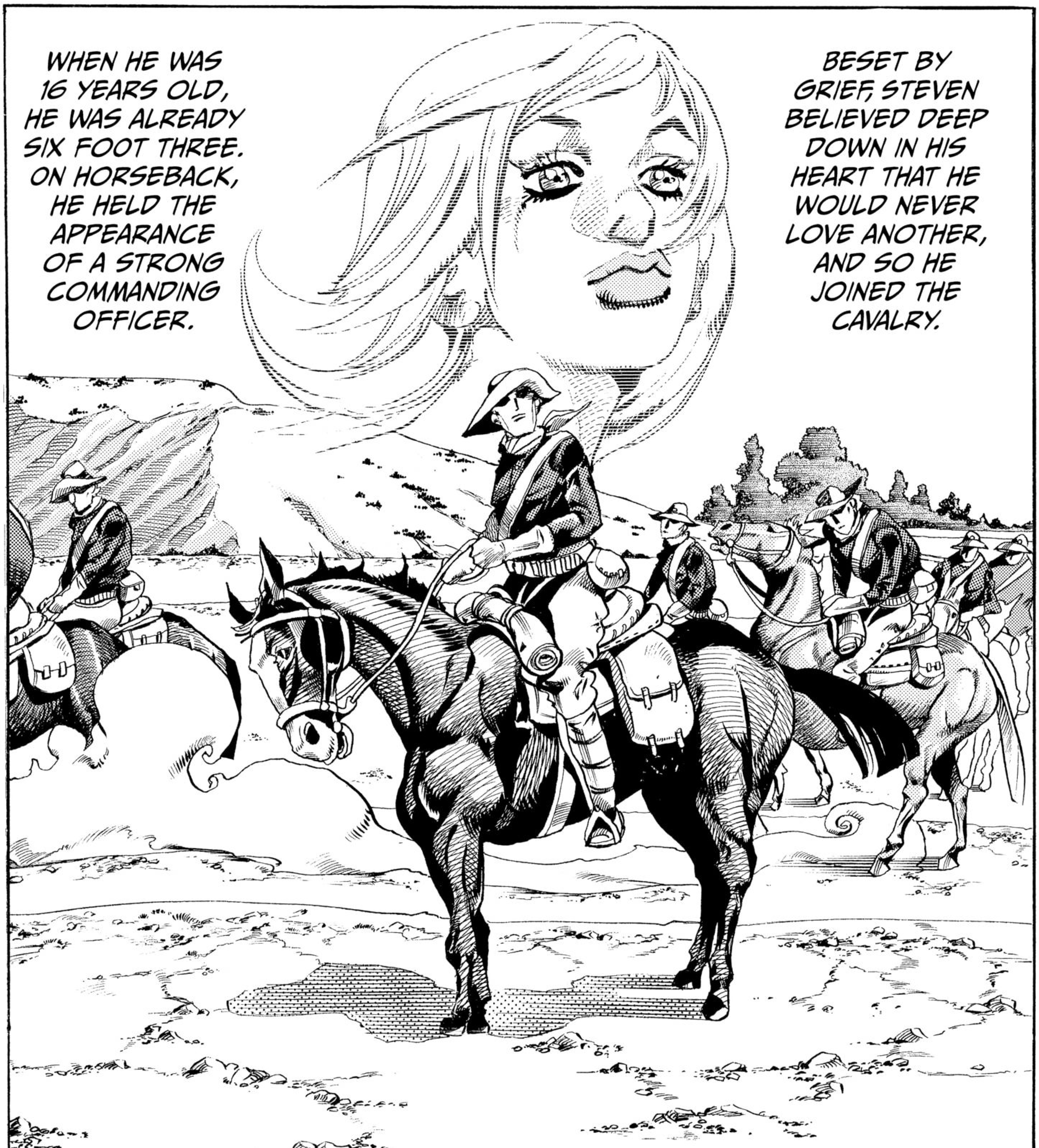
GYRO ZEPPELI FINISHES IN FIRST PLACE!
IT'S A COMMANDING VICTORY WITH THE OTHERS MORE THAN FIVE LENGTHS BEHIND!
HE TOOK CONTROL OF THE RACE FROM START TO FINISH!
WITH A RUNNING TIME OF 18 MINUTES AND SEVEN SECONDS, GYRO ZEPPELI REIGNS AS OUR FIRST-STAGE CHAMPION!
THE FIRST RACE LEADER OF THE STEEL BALL RUN HAS ARRIVED!
ドワァァ
BA-DADUM
VWOOOM
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
YAAH
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

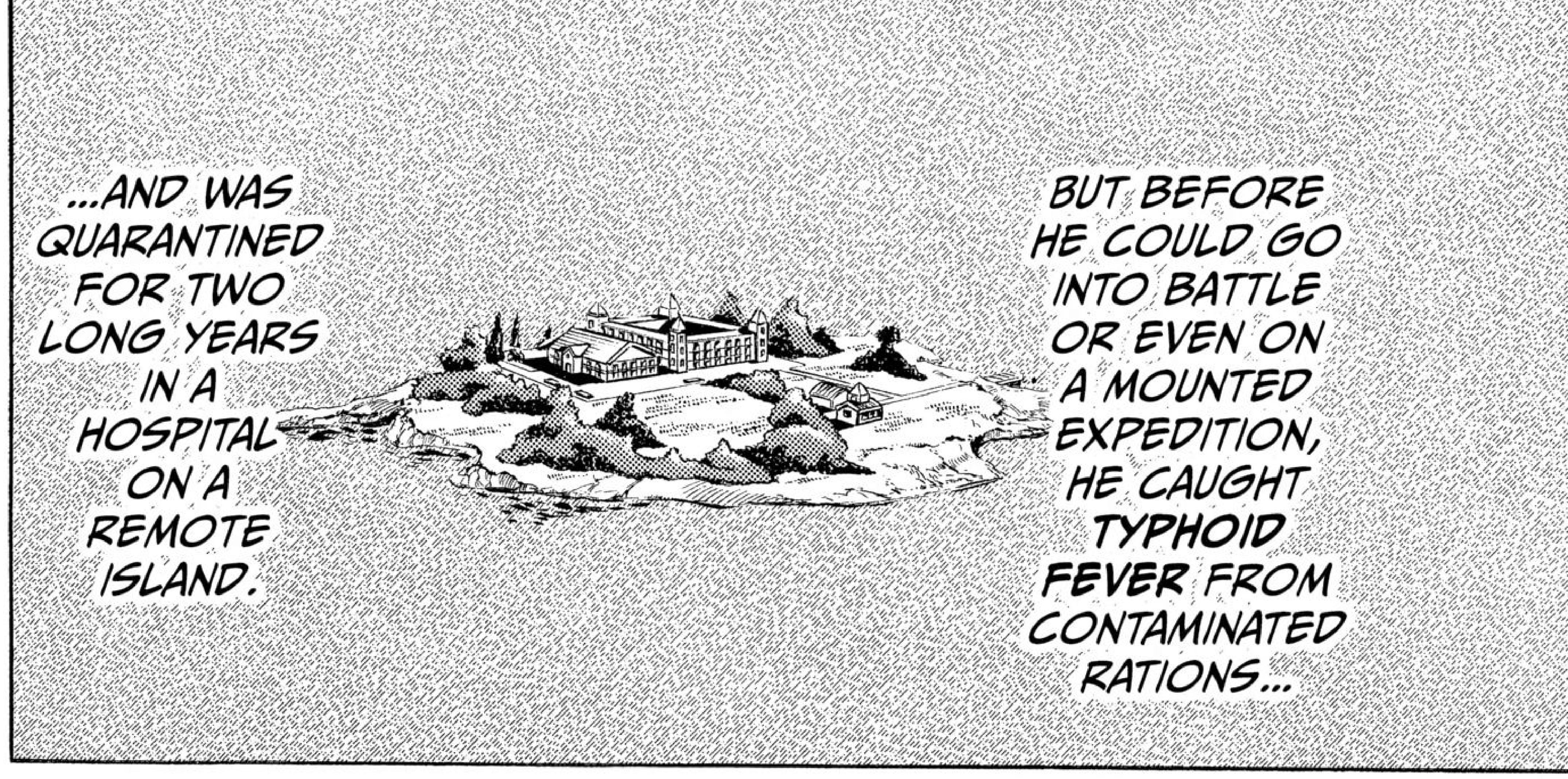
BONUS STORY:

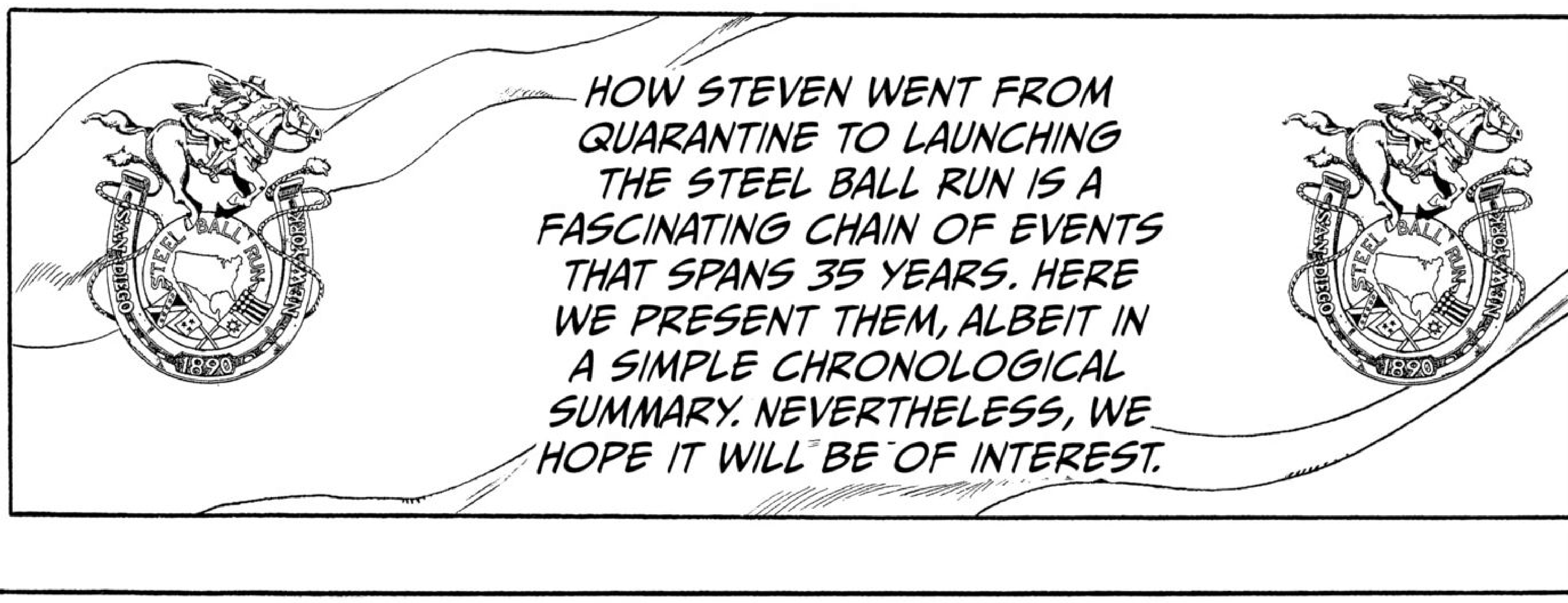
The Tale of How the Steel Ball Run Came to Be


THE EARLY LIFE OF EVENT PROMOTER STEVEN STEEL (AGE 51) IS AS FOLLOWS.
氏(51)の
BORN IN NEW YORK CITY IN 1840, STEVEN WAS THE SON OF IRISH IMMIGRANTS AND THE FOURTH OF SEVEN SIBLINGS. HIS FATHER WAS A POOR BLACKSMITH.
AT THE AGE OF 15, STEVEN FELL IN LOVE WITH THE BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER OF A FLORIST, AND THE COUPLE VOWED TO SPEND THEIR LIVES TOGETHER.

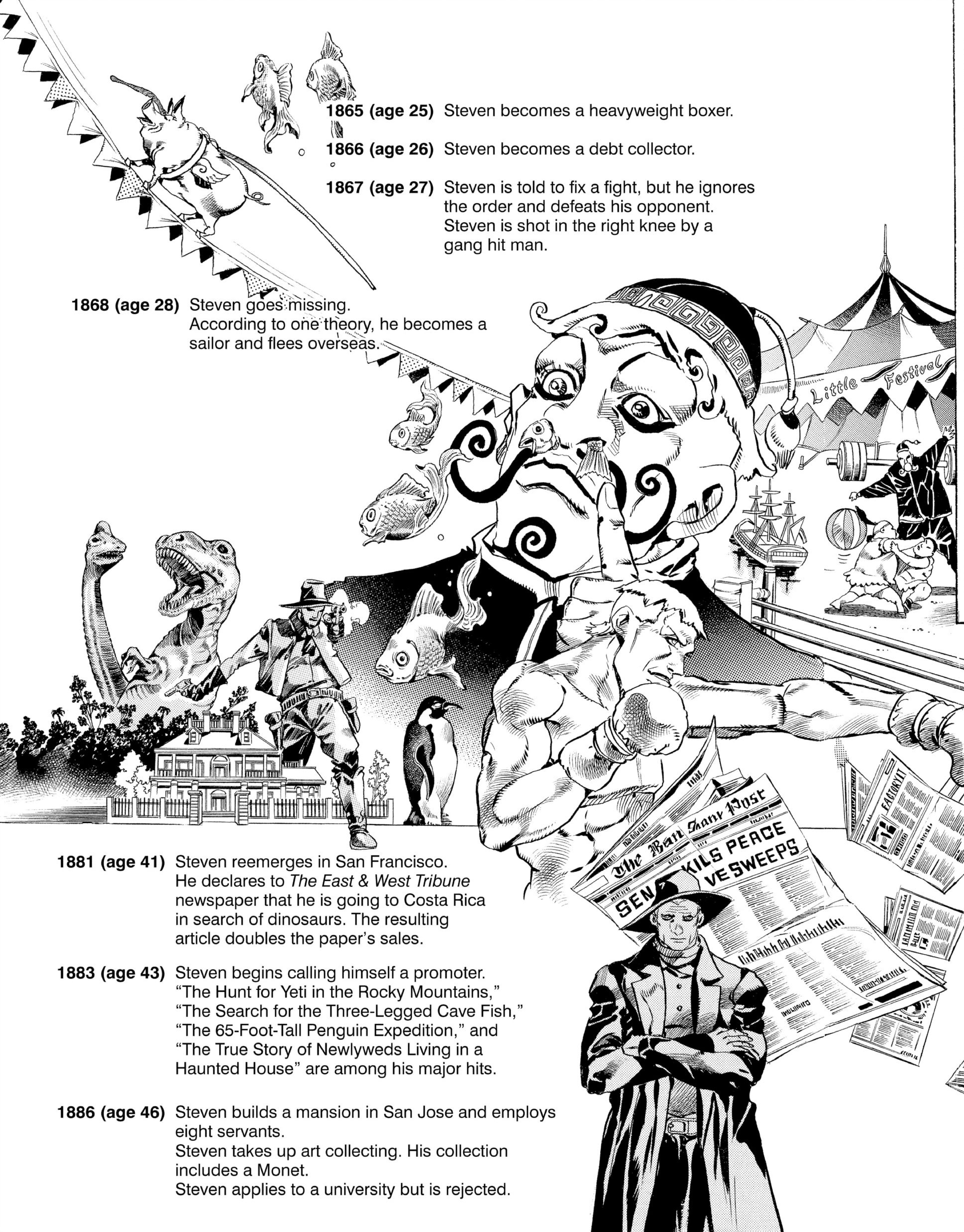

BUT A CARRIAGE ACCIDENT CUT HIS YOUNG LOVE'S LIFE TRAGICALLY SHORT.


BESET BY GRIEF, STEVEN BELIEVED DEEP DOWN IN HIS HEART THAT HE WOULD NEVER LOVE ANOTHER, AND SO HE JOINED THE CAVALRY.
WHEN HE WAS 16 YEARS OLD, HE WAS ALREADY SIX FOOT THREE. ON HORSEBACK, HE HELD THE APPEARANCE OF A STRONG COMMANDING OFFICER.

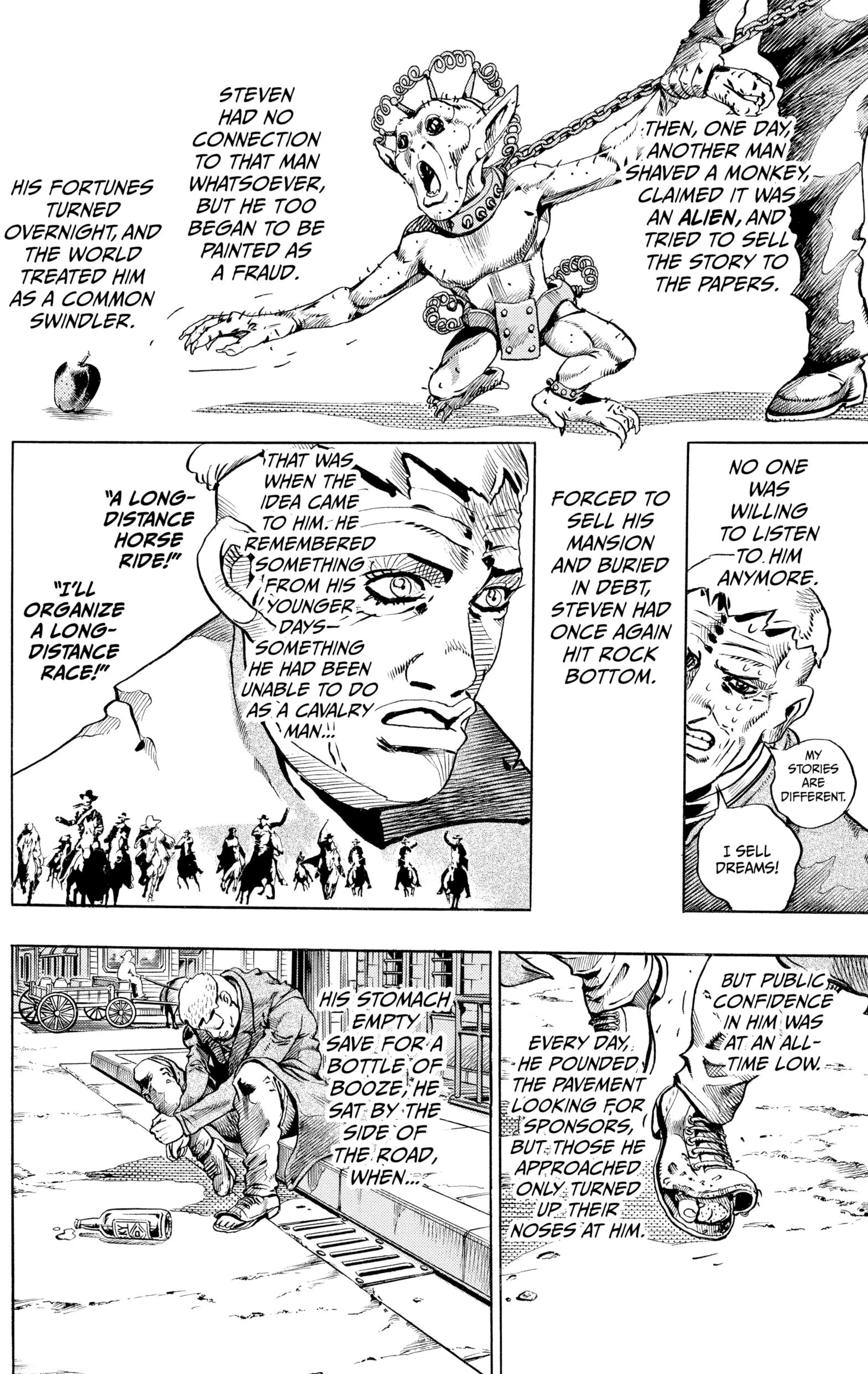

BUT BEFORE HE COULD GO INTO BATTLE OR EVEN ON A MOUNTED EXPEDITION, HE CAUGHT **TYPHOID FEVER** FROM CONTAMINATED RATIONS...
...AND WAS QUARANTINED FOR TWO LONG YEARS IN A HOSPITAL ON A REMOTE ISLAND.

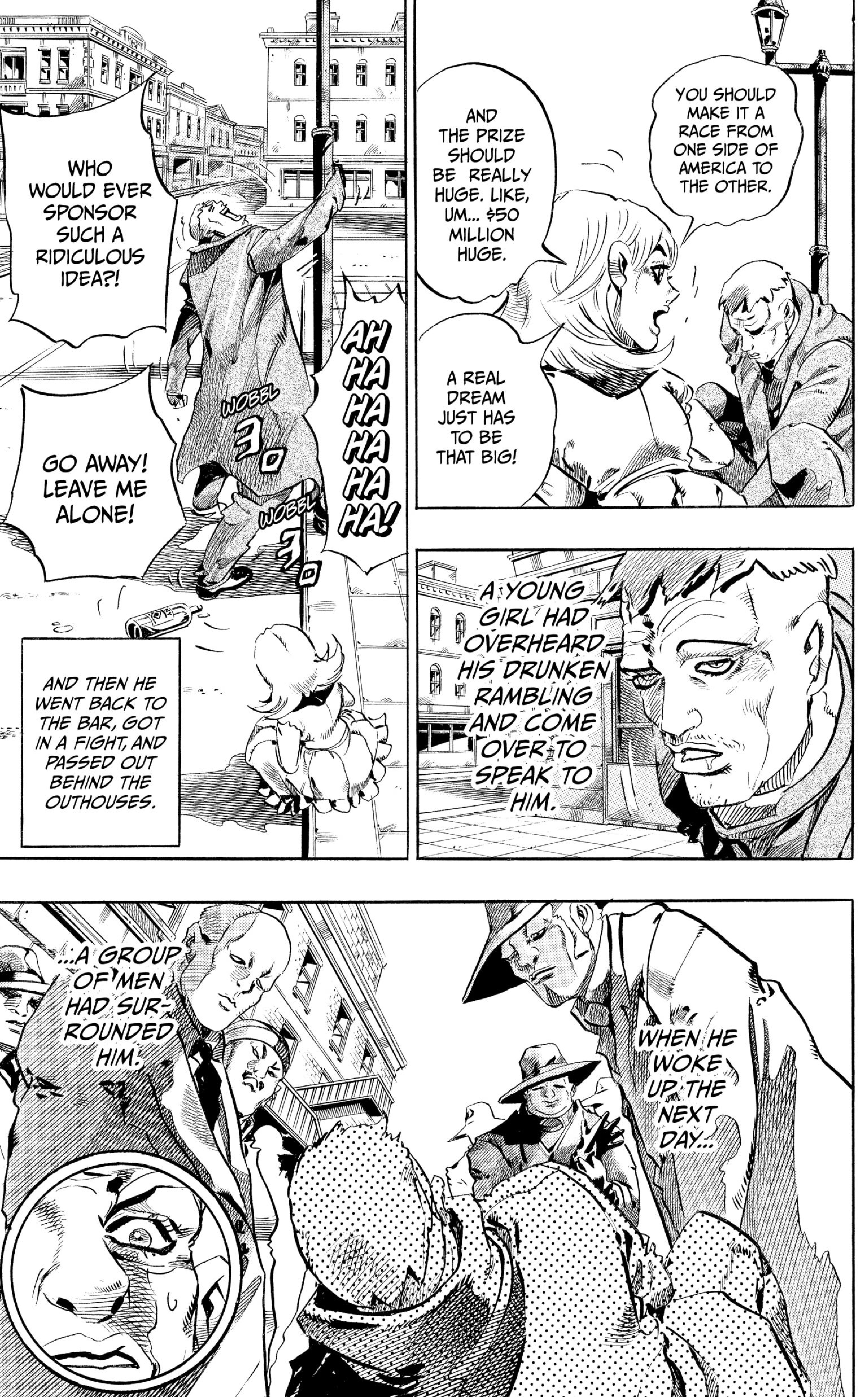

HOW STEVEN WENT FROM QUARANTINE TO LAUNCHING THE STEEL BALL RUN IS A FASCINATING CHAIN OF EVENTS THAT SPANS 35 YEARS. HERE WE PRESENT THEM, ALBEIT IN A SIMPLE CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY. NEVERTHELESS, WE HOPE IT WILL BE OF INTEREST.

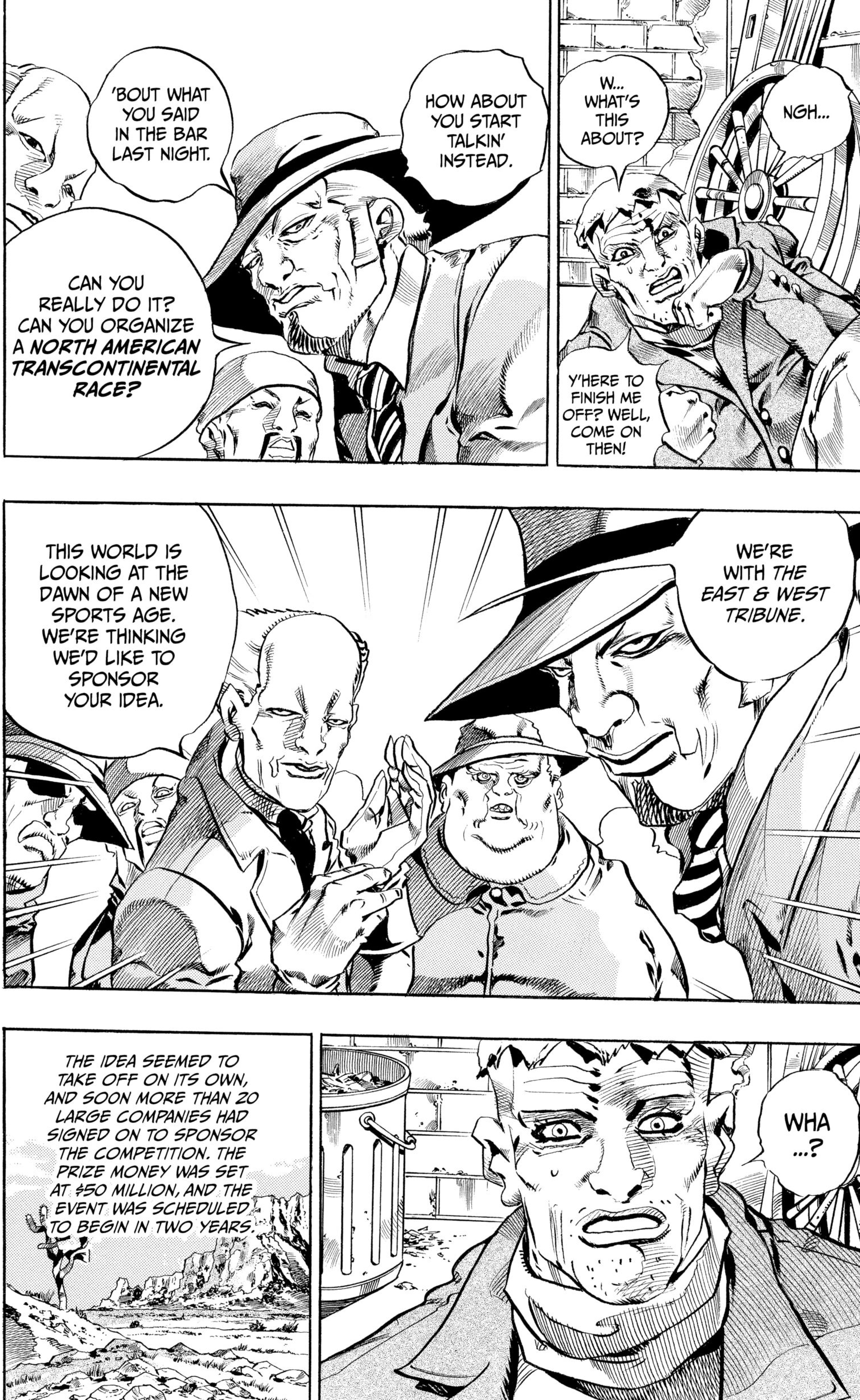
1858 (age 18)	After being released from the hospital, Steven is discharged from the cavalry with a newfound lack of purpose in his life. Steven, however, develops a special talent: he can put goldfish into his mouth and produce them from his nose. He takes a part-time job in the circus, where he dresses up as an Asian man. The audiences love his goldfish trick.
1859 (age 19)	Steven becomes the star of the circus.
1860 (age 20)	Steven tours the country with the circus.
1861 (age 21)	Steven develops several new attractions for the circus: little women wrestling, a man who can pop his eyes out, and tightrope-walking pigs. The circus is more popular than ever.
1863 (age 23)	Steven begins to circumvent the circus director and bosses his colleagues around like a dictator. A huge argument breaks out, and he is fired from the circus.
1865 (age 25)	Steven becomes a heavyweight boxer.
1866 (age 26)	Steven becomes a debt collector.
1867 (age 27)	Steven is told to fix a fight, but he ignores the order and defeats his opponent. Steven is shot in the right knee by a gang hit man.
1868 (age 28)	Steven goes missing. According to one theory, he becomes a sailor and flees overseas.

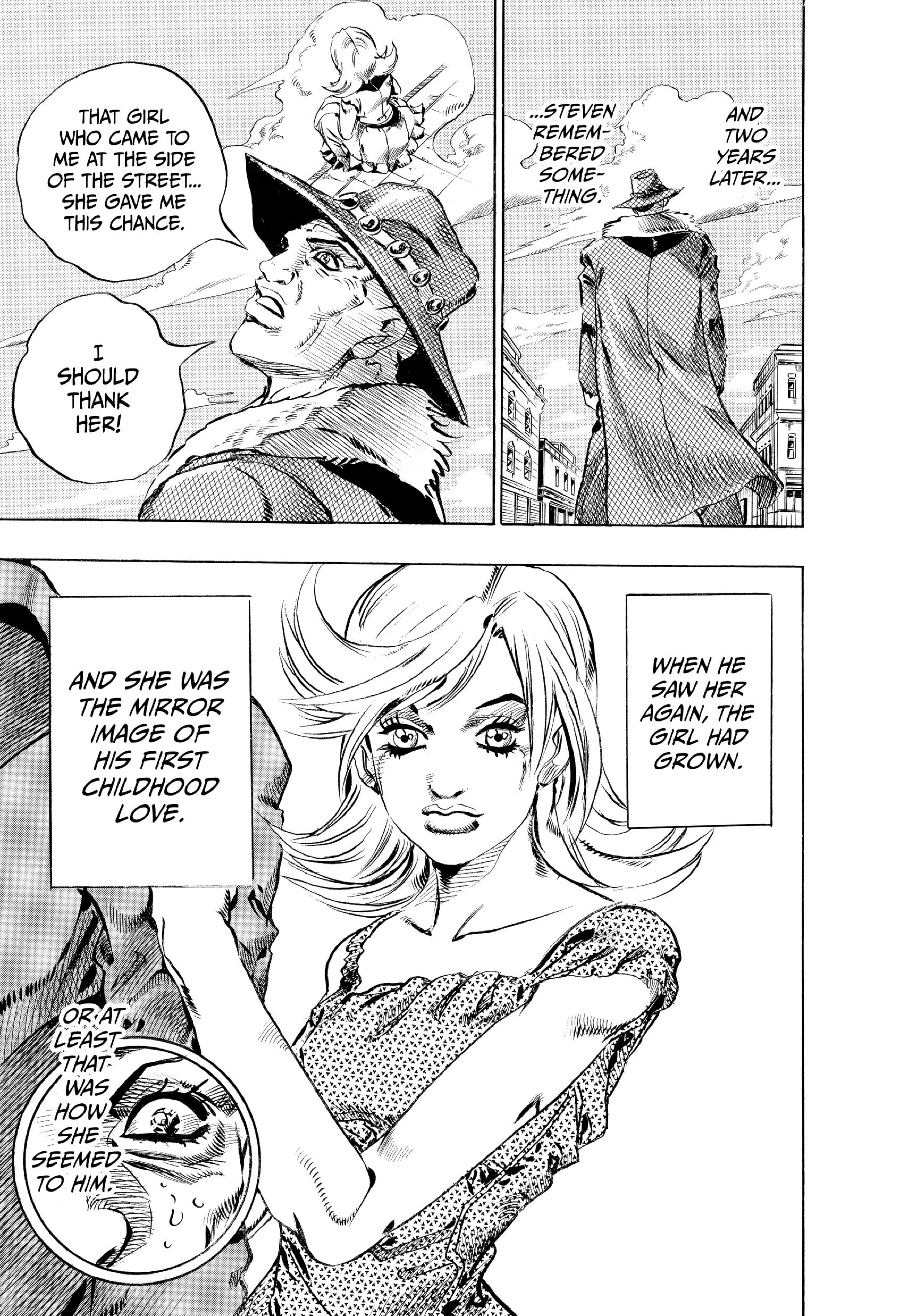

Little Festival
The San Franc Post
SEN KILS PEACE
VE SWEEPS

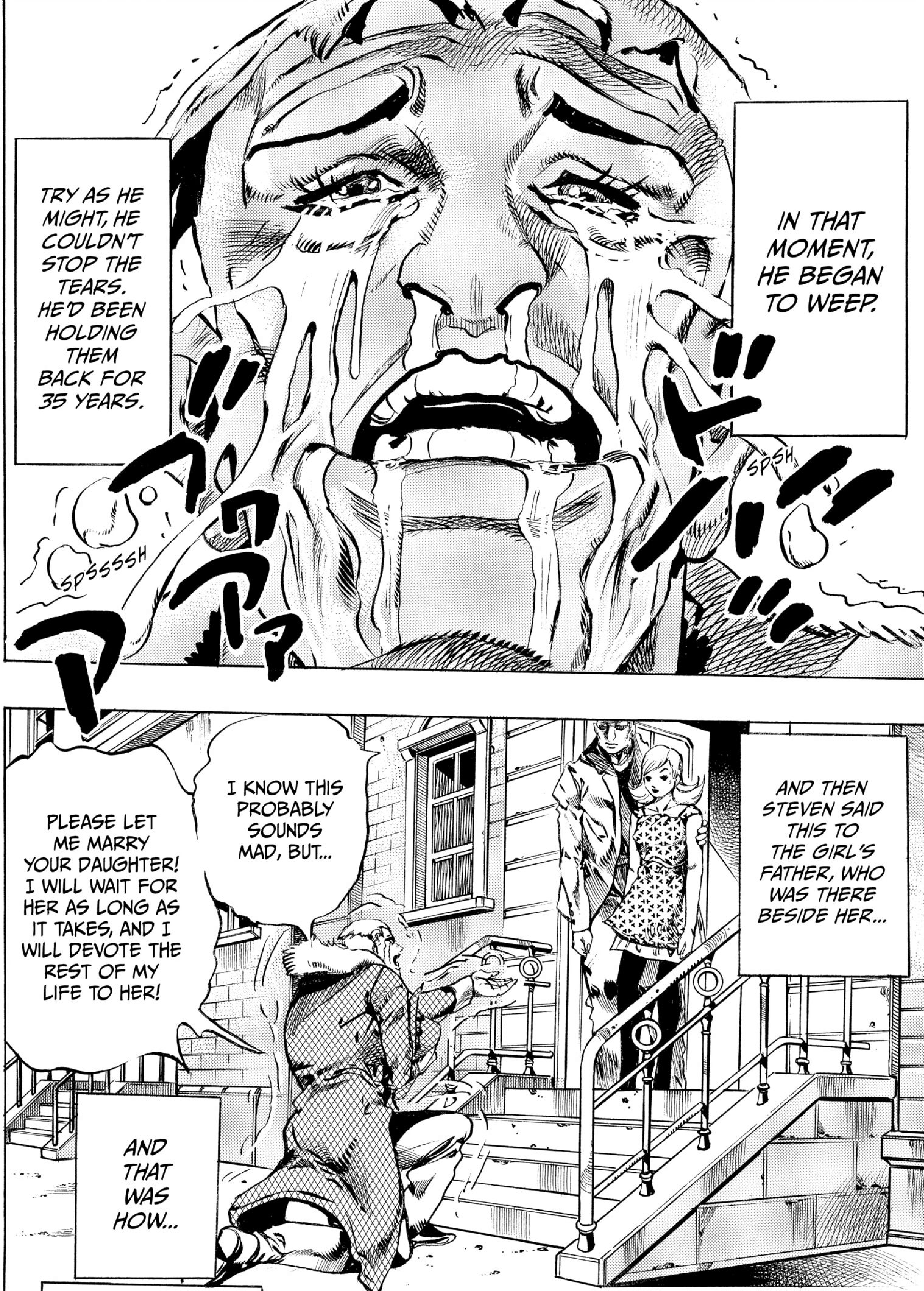
1881 (age 41)	Steven reemerges in San Francisco. He declares to *The East & West Tribune* newspaper that he is going to Costa Rica in search of dinosaurs. The resulting article doubles the paper's sales.
1883 (age 43)	Steven begins calling himself a promoter. "The Hunt for Yeti in the Rocky Mountains," "The Search for the Three-Legged Cave Fish," "The 65-Foot-Tall Penguin Expedition," and "The True Story of Newlyweds Living in a Haunted House" are among his major hits.
1886 (age 46)	Steven builds a mansion in San Jose and employs eight servants. Steven takes up art collecting. His collection includes a Monet. Steven applies to a university but is rejected.


THEN, ONE DAY, ANOTHER MAN SHAVED A MONKEY, CLAIMED IT WAS AN **ALIEN**, AND TRIED TO SELL THE STORY TO THE PAPERS.
STEVEN HAD NO CONNECTION TO THAT MAN WHATSOEVER, BUT HE TOO BEGAN TO BE PAINTED AS A FRAUD.
HIS FORTUNES TURNED OVERNIGHT, AND THE WORLD TREATED HIM AS A COMMON SWINDLER.
NO ONE WAS WILLING TO LISTEN TO HIM ANYMORE.
MY STORIES ARE DIFFERENT.
I SELL DREAMS!
FORCED TO SELL HIS MANSION AND BURIED IN DEBT, STEVEN HAD ONCE AGAIN HIT ROCK BOTTOM.
THAT WAS WHEN THE IDEA CAME TO HIM. HE REMEMBERED SOMETHING FROM HIS YOUNGER DAYS—SOMETHING HE HAD BEEN UNABLE TO DO AS A CAVALRY MAN...!
"A LONG-DISTANCE HORSE RIDE!"
"I'LL ORGANIZE A LONG-DISTANCE RACE!"
BUT PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN HIM WAS AT AN ALL-TIME LOW.
EVERY DAY, HE POUNDED THE PAVEMENT LOOKING FOR SPONSORS, BUT THOSE HE APPROACHED ONLY TURNED UP THEIR NOSES AT HIM.
HIS STOMACH EMPTY SAVE FOR A BOTTLE OF BOOZE, HE SAT BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD, WHEN...


YOU SHOULD MAKE IT A RACE FROM ONE SIDE OF AMERICA TO THE OTHER.
AND THE PRIZE SHOULD BE REALLY HUGE. LIKE, UM... $50 MILLION HUGE.
A REAL DREAM JUST HAS TO BE THAT BIG!
A YOUNG GIRL HAD OVERHEARD HIS DRUNKEN RAMBLING AND COME OVER TO SPEAK TO HIM.
WHO WOULD EVER SPONSOR SUCH A RIDICULOUS IDEA?!
AH HA HA HA HA HA HA!
WOBBL
ヨロ
GO AWAY! LEAVE ME ALONE!
WOBBL
ヨロ
AND THEN HE WENT BACK TO THE BAR, GOT IN A FIGHT, AND PASSED OUT BEHIND THE OUTHOUSES.
WHEN HE WOKE UP THE NEXT DAY...
...A GROUP OF MEN HAD SURROUNDED HIM.


NGH...
W... WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?
Y'HERE TO FINISH ME OFF? WELL, COME ON THEN!
HOW ABOUT YOU START TALKIN' INSTEAD.
'BOUT WHAT YOU SAID IN THE BAR LAST NIGHT.
CAN YOU REALLY DO IT? CAN YOU ORGANIZE A ***NORTH AMERICAN TRANSCONTINENTAL RACE?***
WE'RE WITH *THE EAST & WEST TRIBUNE.*
THIS WORLD IS LOOKING AT THE DAWN OF A NEW SPORTS AGE. WE'RE THINKING WE'D LIKE TO SPONSOR YOUR IDEA.
WHA ...?
THE IDEA SEEMED TO TAKE OFF ON ITS OWN, AND SOON MORE THAN 20 LARGE COMPANIES HAD SIGNED ON TO SPONSOR THE COMPETITION. THE PRIZE MONEY WAS SET AT $50 MILLION, AND THE EVENT WAS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN TWO YEARS.


AND TWO YEARS LATER...
...STEVEN REMEMBERED SOMETHING.
THAT GIRL WHO CAME TO ME AT THE SIDE OF THE STREET... SHE GAVE ME THIS CHANCE.
I SHOULD THANK HER!
WHEN HE SAW HER AGAIN, THE GIRL HAD GROWN.
AND SHE WAS THE MIRROR IMAGE OF HIS FIRST CHILDHOOD LOVE.
OR AT LEAST THAT WAS HOW SHE SEEMED TO HIM.


IN THAT MOMENT, HE BEGAN TO WEEP.
TRY AS HE MIGHT, HE COULDN'T STOP THE TEARS. HE'D BEEN HOLDING THEM BACK FOR 35 YEARS.
SPSH
SPSSSSH
AND THEN STEVEN SAID THIS TO THE GIRL'S FATHER, WHO WAS THERE BESIDE HER...
I KNOW THIS PROBABLY SOUNDS MAD, BUT...
PLEASE LET ME MARRY YOUR DAUGHTER! I WILL WAIT FOR HER AS LONG AS IT TAKES, AND I WILL DEVOTE THE REST OF MY LIFE TO HER!
AND THAT WAS HOW...
...STEVEN STEEL'S DREAM CAME TO BE.

BONUS STORY:

The Tale of How the Steel Ball Run Came to Be

— THE END —

SAN DIEGO
NEW YORK
1890

**To be continued...
in the second stage!**

Author's Comments

Although *Steel Ball Run* was in essence written as Part 7 of *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*, I wanted to avoid emphasizing that connection for the benefit of new readers.

With that being said, when it comes to a manga creator's approach to starting any new story, I firmly believe that attempting to ignore their previous works or completely leave them in the past is wrong. A story's themes must be a continuation of those that came before.

* * *

Just as one season changes into another, or as a person walks from one stage of life to the next, I believe that a story's themes must also be an unbroken extension of those which came before, and that to completely sever that connection would be a mistake.

In *Steel Ball Run*, some characters have names similar to other characters who have previously appeared in *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*. Please think of the characters in *Steel Ball Run* as their ancestors, or perhaps alternate versions from a parallel universe.

However, the theme remains the same–a song in celebration of humanity. Now, how will these characters push onward through the bizarre race that is life?

JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE – Part 7

STEEL BALL RUN

VOLUME 1
BY HIROHIKO ARAKI

DELUXE HARDCOVER EDITION
Translation: NATHAN A COLLINS
Touch-Up Art & Lettering: MARK McMURRAY
Design: ADAM GRANO
Editor: HOLLY FISHER

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